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DREAM CHILDREN.

DREAM CHILDREN

BY

HORACE E. SCUDDER

BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
The Riverside Press Cambridge

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By HORACE E. SCUDDER.

To my Sister.

PREFACE.

IT happened once to Elia, gentlest of humorists, to fall into a reverie, in which his memory and imagination, playing about the forms of two children, enchanted him with their presence, until, under a too searching gaze, the apparitions grew fainter, passing away at last as mournful faces, the only embodiments of unfulfilled dreams. Perhaps I also may be permitted to give the name of "Dream Children" to certain creations bearing some kinship to those of Elia, yet differing in this respect, among others, that whatever aid my memory has given to my imagination, it has, unlike Elia's, fetched its subjects from no remoter periods than a somewhat short and uneventful life has contained. But it would be an unwise task to look too closely into any points of comparison between

my Dream Children and those of Elia, for I am afraid I should discover that the mere name is all they have in common.

Themselves born of dreams, the children chronicled in this book are sometimes dreamers also; but fear not, reader, a summons to a fantastic banquet of those who live only in dreams, for if there be such phantoms assembled herein, you will surely find them restrained from any unseemly antics, by the presence of more corporeal creatures. And as it never was intended that either children or grown people should live apart, one from the other, I have thought it most becoming that here also they should be in company, the old and the young together, very much in earnest about their dreams, I trust, and possessed of a proper share of common sense when awake.

In fine, lest I should be thought even now talking in my sleep, I have tried to embody in the persons of childlike people, of all times of life, some conceptions of spiritual excellence which appear to us most readily through the

presence of children, and which reappear, it may be, in our less worldly moods afterward. The beauty we dream about may be the most real after all. As, too, the children who bless us in our daily life are by no means mere embodiments of unearthly excellence, I have not thought it necessary to rob them of their ordinary attributes for the sake of investing them with some supernatural character not so easily appreciated by us: and in consideration of their foolish credulity, which we of course have outgrown, I have permitted them still to overhear the talk of fowls of the air and beasts of the earth.

Once before I sent forth a flock of children, born in like manner with these. They found their way to some hospitable homes; and in those at any rate, I hope there will now be voices to say, not wholly in derision, "Let us hear what the dreamer saith."

Contents.

	Page
The Pot of Gold.	
I. Chrif and Rhoda	15
II. In the New Land	22
III. In the Palace of the Princess	31
IV. In the Ruins	37
V. Rhoda and Chrif	44
The Two Roses	49
John's Nap	61
The Old House in the Wheat-Forest	75
Widow Dorothy's New Year's Eve.	
I. The Old Lady at Home	91
II. The Old Year out and the New Year in	103
The Violet	111
The Magic-Lantern	121
What befell the Range	133
The Rich Man's Place	149
Unlucky Fritz	167

THE MARRIAGE OF THE PINE.

I. THE WOOING 185

II. THE BETROTHAL 200

III. THE NUPTIALS 202

THE GOLDEN EGG AND THE COCK OF GOLD . . . 207

CARL'S VOYAGING 219

THE PRINCE'S VISIT 231

The Pot of Gold.

THE POT OF GOLD.

I.

CHRIF AND RHODA.

UPON the edge of a marsh, lying near the sea and fed from it by tidal creeks, stood a weather-battered house, that went by the name of the Red Inn. Its front was on the road, and had a wide gallery across both the first and second stories; the end of the house looked up the road; but it had only one small square window to see out of, and as one came down the way, one might fancy the Inn peeping out of its single eye for guests who had long ceased to come, — the fierce sea-captains and red-nosed sailors who used to sit upon the galleries and smoke their pipes and drink their cups. One of them, indeed, seemed to have remained,

and to have taken up his post for life upon the roof of an out-building. There he stood, dressed to-day just as his friends used to dress fifty years back, when they dozed on the gallery. His blue coat and buff waistcoat were somewhat duller, and his cocked hat, though fast on his head, was rather rusty; but he stood firm, holding before his nose a quadrant, with which he was always taking observations, whether the sun shone or not. Indeed, so stoutly did he keep his post through all kinds of skies and winds that one would have known him for the Genius of the Weather. There was no doubt that he regulated matters. He looked so positive, as he would whirl round to the east and say to himself, "Now I 'll have the wind this way," and then, after a pause, back again to the north, and say, "Now this way"; and so it would blow just as he said.

But the Genius of the Weather and the name Red Inn were all that remained of the former glory. The red paint had gone with tne innkeeper and the innkeeper's guests; and as if to show that the house had nothing more to do with the sea and people that sailed on the sea, an old boat stood on its keel in the yard, filled with loam, out of which grew all kinds of flowers in their seasons. This was Rhoda's flower-

garden. Rhoda lived in the Red Inn with her grandmother, the huckleberry-woman, and with a little boy named Christopher, or Chrif, as he was always called, who was an orphan. They lived in so much of the Inn as they needed, and left the rest of the rooms to reflect on former days when they were all occupied.

When this story begins it was an afternoon in July. The grandmother had gone to the pasture for berries, but she had left the children at home: she never took them with her to pick, — that was a way she had. They were playing at sailing boats by one of the creeks in the marsh. Chrif, with his pocket-knife, shaped pieces of bark in a rude fashion, and Rhoda made a dandelion mast for one, and put two daisy sailors in another, and freighted a third with grass and leaves, while in a fourth, against a reed mast leaned a violet as passenger, with the ship all to himself. Another and another was added, till quite a little flotilla was sailing down the stream, some making shipwreck upon rocks, some dangerously driven from side to side between a miniature Scylla and Charybdis, or lying becalmed in some quiet curve out of reach of the current, while others pressed on with various fortune till quite beyond sight. The children shouted with

glee, and made larger ventures, until at length they had become so expert in ship-building that nothing was left but to set afloat a Great Eastern which Chrif had ambitiously made of the largest piece of wood he could find.

"Now I am going to load her with just as much as she can bear," said he; "and, Rhoda, you must have a boat too, and we 'll set them both off together."

"But I don't want a great one like yours," said she; "and I 'm not going to load it." So she took an evergreen twig, and fastened upright in it a clover-blossom, while Chrif brought stones and sand and chips and grass to load his Great Eastern. They launched the two and started them down the stream. How bravely they sailed!

"Mine is going to India," said Chrif. "I learned about it in my geography lesson the other day. It 's gone to carry gold, and it will bring back pearls and pepper and rice."

"Is that a great way off?" asked Rhoda.

"O, it takes years and years to get there," said he. "It 's not far from Thibet."

"How much you know, Chrif!" said Rhoda.

"I mean to go there some day," said Chrif. "People ride on elephants and live in splendid houses."

"Well, mine is going round the world, I guess," said Rhoda; and it really seemed in a fair way to make the journey, for it was sailing down the creek, while Chrif's, staggering along with its load, made shipwreck before it reached India. Its gold went to the bottom, but the Great Eastern itself, tipping over on its side, floated down after the evergreen slip with its fragile clover ensign.

The children had been so busy that they had not noticed a thunder-shower almost ready to break upon them. They had just time to escape to the house, when the rain poured down, and they watched it out of the one-eye window. The Genius of the Weather seemed to be in some doubt: one would say he changed his mind very often; but then he was so positive each time! he whirled all round the four points, settling which way the wind should blow,—that was trying experiments, and the children watched him. "Now I'll have it this way," he said at last, and stood firmly, looking at the west. He held the quadrant at his nose and seemed to say, "Now the sun may come out, and I will take an observation"; and the sun did come out, though it was sprinkling still.

The children ran down stairs and into the yard.

The rain had soaked the earth in the boat-garden so that Rhoda could pull up the weeds. The flowers throve wonderfully under her care; each month there were new blossoms. Just now the larkspur and sweet-william and spider-wort were blooming.

"Quick!" said Chrif, who was out in the road, "there's a rainbow!" Rhoda ran to him, and they watched it together. "Why don't it come nearer?" said Chrif, "I should think it might. What pretty colors! and how ugly our old house looks. I wish I were where the rainbow is."

"There is just the color of my larkspur," said Rhoda.

"O poh!" said Chrif, "only a flower! that's not much. Now if I were only rich, I would n't stay here. I'd go off into the world"; — but that Chrif was always saying. "How grand it must be over there beyond the rainbow!"

"One end is quite near us," said Rhoda.

"Are ye looking for the pot of gold?" said a voice behind. It was old Mother Bagg, who had come up. She sold brooms and lived by herself in the woods. People said she had a pailful of half-dollars hidden in the house: but what will not people say! She was dripping wet, but that was nothing to her.

White

"A pot of gold!" cried Chrif; "where is it?"

"It 's at the foot of the rainbow," she said. "Did ye never hear? If ye get at the foot of the rainbow, and then dig and dig, ye 'll come to a pot of gold."

"Rhoda! let 's go quick!" said Chrif.

"I don't know," said Rhoda, "I want to finish my flowers."

"But it 's only a few fields away."

Mother Bagg laughed. "Ye must hurry," said she. "The rainbow don't stay for lazy folk."

"I 'm off!" said Chrif, and away he went in search of the pot of gold. Mother Bagg trudged on. Rhoda watched Chrif as he ran across the fields, till she lost sight of him behind a hill. Then the rainbow grew fainter and at last faded away, as the sun came out more powerfully, and the rain stopped.

"I 'm afraid he was too late," she said, and turned back to the boat-garden. Her grandmother, the old huckleberry-woman, now came home, and Rhoda told her where Chrif had gone. "How rich we shall all be!" said she, "when Chrif comes back with his pot of gold."

"He will not find it, not even a saucerful, you may depend upon it," said the grandmother; but Rhoda was not so sure.

II.

IN THE NEW LAND.

NOW let us hear what happened to Chrif.

He left the road, and went running across the fields. No matter for the wet places or the brambles or the fences, he took the straightest way to the rainbow. It was not far off when he started, that was certain, but when he came to the field where he thought to reach it, behold! the rainbow was still beyond and really about as far away as when he first saw it. A hill lay before him, and it seemed to Chrif that surely upon the top of that hill the rainbow arch sprung from the ground. He scrambled up, panting: the colors of the rainbow grew fainter, — it would soon be too late. He reached the top, — the sun shone out brightly, the rain stopped, and Chrif could see the last tint of the bow fade away in the valley beneath. The rainbow was gone, and he had not reached the foot of it, and now how should he know where the pot of gold was?

Chrif sat down on the slope of the hill to rest himself, and to wish that the rainbow had lasted a few

moments longer. "I was just coming to it," said he; "it was in the valley below." As he looked down there again, he saw a flock of sheep grazing, and under a tree was the shepherd-boy stretched upon the green grass, and leaning upon his elbow. Chrif went down the hill, and, drawing near, called to the boy, but got no answer: the boy lay still. Then he saw that he was reading a book, and coming up behind, Chrif looked over his shoulder and read the page. It was an old book, and he read:—

"Now beyond the setting of the sun lies the New Land. It is a country full of mountains and forests and rivers. The sands of the streams are golden and all manner of wondrous fruits grow upon the trees, and monsters dwell in the mountains. The inhabitants of the land are of tawny skin, and about their necks they wear necklaces of pearls, which they say are very plentiful thereabout. Nor are they loath to traffic with merchants who visit those shores. They tell, moreover, of a great river far inland, which they say is the end of the earth, for it is so wide that they cannot see to the other bank. Beyond it, they say live the dead, and when they die they are placed upright, facing in that direction, though all other nations face

to the east, and a fishing-hook is placed in the hand of the dead man, that he may not want for food when he shall reach the other side. This is what the savages say; but it is known that it is a country of exceeding riches, and one traveller relates that upon a high pillar near the coast is the famous pot of gold, which if men obtain will never fail them."

"O, where is this country?" cried Chrif, reading no further, and laying his hand upon the book. The shepherd-boy now looked up.

"Will you go?" asked Gavin, for that was his name.

"Go!" exclaimed Chrif. "That I will. Why, the pot of gold is there, and I have come to find it."

"Yes," said Gavin, "the pot of gold is there, and many other things. I will see them all. Come! don't you see the sun is to set, and we must reach the New Land before it is down."

Gavin jumped up with his book, and set out with Chrif. The sheep raised their heads and bleated, and some even began to walk after them; but the boys did not look back. They entered the dark forest, which was flecked with light by the rays of the sun. As they walked, Gavin told stories out of the book to Chrif, and the forest grew brighter; the black trees

were clothed in crimson and scarlet, and the birds that flew about them were like birds of fire darting in and out. They heard more distinctly the sound of plashing water and the voices of men. The forest became thinner and the sounds clearer, until, leaving the woods behind them, they stood upon the shore of a sea. Over the water they saw the low sun shining, and the golden clouds resting on the shadowy mountains that towered to the sky. A gleaming path led across the sea to the New Land, and at this end, near them, they now saw a ship, with sails set and oars hung from the sides, while a multitude of boys clustered about it, and fringed the shore, as if waiting to embark. "The Quest" was painted in red letters upon the ship's prow, and her flag bore the same name.

"Let us set sail," cried the sailor-boys from the ship; and Chrif and Gavin mounted the side, while, amidst the cheers of those on shore, the ship sailed away over the gleaming path. Gavin sat by the prow and read his book. Chrif looked up and around. The sails were of silk, and the ropes of finest cord. The deck was made of wood from the algum-tree, and the masts were white palms. The sails were bent, and the sailor-

boys sat at the oars. Regularly these rose and fell in the shining sea, and with every stroke, the wind too filling the sails, the Quest flew forward, cutting the water which dashed in foam upon the prow. The waves rolled with them in long lines, and, lifting their heads, would bow them, and then once more rise, as if they were worshipping the sun. On they sped, the good ship flying faster as the sun neared the horizon.

"I see the land!" cried Gavin, who was peering beyond the sunset, and then the sailor-boys who sat on the benches redoubled their strokes, while one of their number, a merry fellow, sang gay songs. The sun set, and as soon as it went down the land grew more distinct. The mountains rose behind, and the rivers sounded as they rushed down the sides. It grew darker, and now, when they could but just see the shore, the boys stopped the beat of their oars. Andy ended his gay song. The sails drooped to the mast, for they were at the close of their voyage. Chrif and Gavin leaped upon the beach, and the boys followed after. They could just see the mountains frowning upon them; the trees crowded around, shaking their tops and nodding, nodding to the water, from which rose a floating mist, that hung like a veil over all. The

boys stood still, gathering about Chrif and Gavin, who tried in vain to read in the book he carried. The moon rose, and then everything grew more distinct; the mountains seemed higher and even more rugged, the trees bowed and lifted up their heads, and in the distance all could hear the river roaring in its channel. The ground on which they trod was flinty and barren, and a dreary shore stretched away in the murky shade.

"Let us return in our ship," cried the sailor-boys; and they ran after their leader like frightened sheep.

"I'll not go," shouted Andy after them. "I mean to see my way through this, if it does n't grow any darker." So he and Chrif and Gavin were left alone.

"Come," said Chrif, "let us find the pot of gold."

"Well said! I should like to dip my fingers in it," said Andy.

"You shall have your share," said Chrif. "It is on the top of a pillar, not far from the coast. If you'll stand below, I'll get on your shoulders, and then perhaps I can reach it."

"Only don't let it drop on my head," said Andy, and the three set out, Gavin with his book.

"It would be a good thing if there were guide-boards in this country," said Andy, as they trudged

along. "Now if we only came to one saying, 'Pot of Gold, three miles,' it would look like business."

"O, we can't fail to find it," said Chrif, "for it's not far from the shore, and we certainly shall be able to see the pillar." They walked on in silence, skirting the woods and peering into them for the pillar.

"Ugh!" Andy broke forth; "stepped in a bog! What a nasty country."

"I wonder the natives don't come along," said Chrif. "They wear necklaces of pearls, and are very friendly."

"Croak! croak!"

"Here's one living all by himself in the bog," said Andy. "Now his relations have come out; they're having a meeting. Don't you hear them say, 'Bet-ter go home! bet-ter go home'? I begin to think so too."

"Here is a path," cried Chrif, "leading into the woods. This is no doubt the one. I do believe I see the pillar!"

"Have you got a shilling about you to pay the fee?" said Andy, as they turned up the path. "You don't think we can go up the pillar for nothing?" But even Andy now saw the pillar.

"Hurrah!" he cried, "let's push on!" But he did not need to hurry Chrif, and Gavin was never behind. The path grew rougher; but that was nothing to them, as they pressed forward eagerly. Now they were at the base of the pillar, and the three stood peering up to its top. The moon still shone, and lighted up, though dimly, the scene, so that they could make out the pot of gold resting upon the summit of the pillar.

"Stand at the foot, Andy," said Chrif, "and you upon his shoulders, Gavin, and then I will stand upon yours. Perhaps I can reach it."

"I don't want the pot of gold," said Gavin. "I have seen it; that is enough. Now I will see other things. I will visit the Magic Fountain, and then I will go westward till I find the Great River. Yes, the Great River!" and Gavin shaded his eyes, looking through the woods.

His comrades would not obey his beckoning, and Gavin turned away into the forest. They heard his footfall, then it died away, and they heard it no more.

"I want the pot of gold," said Chrif, and then he thought for a moment, trying to recollect. "Yes, I want it. I will take it to the Red Inn and Rhoda

and the old grandmother; then I shall be very rich, and we shall have everything we wish."

As he said these words he looked on the pillar, and behold! a picture was on its surface. It was the Red Inn, with its yard, and Rhoda standing by the boat-garden, weeding it and watering the flowers. The asters were in bloom. He saw everything, — the house, too, the old grandmother at the one-eye window, and the Genius of the Weather, still taking observations: but he only glanced a moment at these. He kept his eyes on Rhoda, who would look up every little while from her garden, and watch the road, as if she were expecting Chrif. As he gazed on the picture, the pillar faded out of sight, the pot of gold on the top disappeared, and then the picture also went out, and Chrif was in darkness.

"Hark!" whispered Andy, at his side. "I hear something."

Chrif listened.

III.

IN THE PALACE OF THE PRINCESS.

IN the midst of the gloom and desolateness all about him, Chrif heard the faint music that would sound, and then pause, as if waiting for them to follow. Its notes were sweet and enticing.

"O, let us go where the music is!" cried Andy. "There must be all that we want."

But Chrif was reluctant, for he desired to find the lost pillar again. Yet, as the music continued, it became more enchanting, and Chrif suffered Andy to pull him along until he was as eager as Andy himself. The moon still shone, but now more brightly, and it made their path full of beauty. The ground yielded to their tread, and they pressed on, led by the music, which grew more clear and loud. It was the music of flutes, and it seemed even as if the trees rocked gently, keeping time with it. But the trees they were leaving behind, for as they neared the flutists, they emerged from the woods. Now the moon shone upon the scene before them, but the moon was hardly more brilliant than the blaze of a myriad lamps

that shone in the streets and from the houses of a great city that stood upon the plain.

Andy was wild with delight as they entered the streets, and Chrif heard and saw all with new wonder at every moment. It was no doubt a festive night, for not only were the streets lighted so that the rows of lights looked like strings of pearls, but the fronts of the houses were hung with gay lanterns. People jostled one another good-humoredly upon the walk, and many were dressed in fanciful robes of the most elegant patterns. At every square fireworks were rushing up into the sky, or whirling round on wheels, or flying across the streets like birds; there was great clapping of hands and loud huzzas. The curtains were drawn from the windows of the houses, and Chrif and Andy could see within crowds of people there also, walking about amongst flowers or dancing in couples. The music of the flutes, which still seemed to draw them on, now ceased, and they heard a horn sounding not far off. They stood still; so did all about them. The boys and girls stopped clapping; the fireworks waited; the people in the streets stood where they were, and in the houses no one moved. The horn sounded again, and every one held his breath

Then, just before them appeared the man who blew the horn. He sat upon a prancing horse, and was all ablaze with colors. Now he blew his horn once more, and as the sound curled away like smoke into the air, he called out in a loud voice, —

"This night there is a ball in the Palace, and all may come, and to whomsoever the Princess shall give her hand in the dance, he shall have the pot of gold."

"Hurrah!" cried all the people, but Chrif cried hurrah louder than all. "Hurrah!" shouted Andy. "What times we will have!" And with Chrif he set out for the Palace, while all the people followed. Away went the fireworks again, the people in the houses danced, and the children clapped and sang in the streets. When they were come to the Palace, that was more magnificent than all the rest of the city. Fountains sparkled in front. "Drink!" said a girl who sat in the very centre of the largest fountain, and she held out her hollow hand, which was full of the fountain's water. They drank from her hand, and the fountain became of ruby color, and the maiden within smiled through it. Andy would have lingered here, but Chrif drew him on. They

marched up the steps of the Palace, and none said nay. Why should they, for no one was handsomer than Chrif, and Andy had a face to look at. When they entered the great hall, they saw the Princess upon her throne. There was dancing and gayety; but the Princess did not dance, she was waiting for the handsomest, to dance with him, and all the good-looking dancers stood in a row, each trying to look handsomer than the other, but the Princess would not choose one of them. Everything about the Palace was as splendid as it could be, but there was one charming toy. It was a pearl clock, that stood above the Princess, and when the hours came round, a golden cuckoo, covered with diamonds, would open a little door, come out, cuckoo as many times as there were hours, and then go back, shutting the door carefully after him, so that his diamonds might not get dusty. But it was not time yet for him to come out.

Although the handsomest dancers stood in a row, waiting to be asked by the Princess, yet there was a great frolic going on at the same time among the others. Flower-balls were thrown about, midst shouts of laughter, and every one seemed determined to

have a most riotous time. Andy thought he should like that; but then he hoped he might get a chance to dance with the Princess. She saw them both, and she said to herself, "There are two who are handsomest, and one is handsomer than the other," but she did nothing yet. Andy, tired of waiting, joined the frolic-party, but Chrif stood still. The Princess looked at him again, and said to herself, "No one could be handsomer." Then she stepped down from her throne. The frolic-party kept on, but the row of handsome dancers was in a great flutter. Every one hoped that he was the one, and each tried his utmost to look splendid. But the Princess passed them all by, and came to Chrif.

"Dance with me," said she, and she held out her hand.

If Chrif was the handsomest, yet the Princess was the most beautiful. Such a pair never was seen before. All the dancers who stood in a row became black with anger, — not one of them was now in the least handsome. But the Princess at that moment added to her beauty all that they lost. One might say that she was now *perfectly* beautiful.

"Dance with me," said she, "and you shall have the pot of gold."

"The pot of gold!" said Chrif, — "yes, that is it."

"And you shall do what you please with it," said the Princess.

"What was I to do with it?" said Chrif, hesitating and rubbing his forehead. "O, I know. I was to take it home to Rhoda, and then we should be rich, and have all we wanted."

As he said these words, the Princess tapped impatiently with her foot, the music danced, and yet, — "Cuckoo! cuckoo!"

The door of the pearl clock had sprung open, and the bird stood upon the sill, bowing as he sang. What did he sing? The dancers and the Princess and the frolic-party heard cuckoo! cuckoo! cuckoo! What did Chrif hear?

"Rhoda sits by the one-eye window, watching for Chrif. The flowers are dead in the boat-garden. The old grandmother thinks Rhoda is foolish. 'Chrif will never come back,' she says. 'He cares nothing for you.'"

The cuckoo jumped in again, and slammed the door after her. The music grew fainter, but the cuckoo's song sounded yet. Chrif saw the dancers in a row, black with anger, and the frolic-party raging about, and the Princess standing before him.

"Are you a fool?" he heard Andy whisper in his ear, as he whirled past him. "Then I will dance with the Princess."

Harsh music grated on his ear, the walls of the Palace stood about bare and crumbling, ugly forms writhed about him, and one pair more mad than all the others vanished into the night. Then the cuckoo's song ceased, and Chrif was alone.

IV.

IN THE RUINS.

SIGHT and sound had vanished, but sense remained. The water of the fountain which Chrif had drunk from the maiden's hand, at first making his pulse to beat quicker and his cheeks to glow, now began to burn within him, till he seemed set on fire. The air about was stifling, and the burning within drove Chrif forth through the darkness. He stumbled on he knew not whither, for it was black night before and behind, and the moon had set. He must have been driven forward thus for some time, when he began to see a glimmering of light in the east. It was

the first touch of dawn, and now the day grew clear and he could see that he was walking over a wide plain. Only one object could he make out in the distance before him. It was a ruined building, standing alone, with a few trees, tall poplars, which had been planted in two rows, and between which a path led. Down this path he walked, while the poplars seemed to present arms, and call for his pass.

"No doubt they guard some treasure," said Chrif, and he thought with a sigh of the treasure which he had failed to find. The door of the ruined building stood ajar, and, after listening in vain for an answer to his call, he pushed it open, and stood on the threshold. It was dark within, but when his eyes grew used to the darkness he could make out the figure of an old man, sitting in a chair by a table. Chrif now spoke again, but got no answer. "He has not yet waked," said he, and groped his way, with his hands stretched out before him, to the table. It was covered with great books and papers, and a lamp which had burned out hung above it.

"Sir! wake up!" said Chrif, and he laid his hand on his shoulder.

The old man fell forward on the table.

"He has just died!" said Chrif, in horror, starting back. He called aloud, but there was no one else in the ruins but himself and the old man. He brought him out into the air, and buried him beneath the plain. This was a sacred duty; and then Chrif returned to the ruins. He lighted the lamp that swung from above, and looked around the room. The furniture was the chair and table laden with books and papers. One door opened upon the poplar path, another was opposite, behind the chair. It was of stone, and upon the top of it were written two lines, one in letters that he could read, the other, beneath, in strange characters. He read the upper, —

"*Behind this door lies the Pot of Gold: who reads the words written below shall learn the secret of the shut door.*"

But he could not read the lower line, and he turned to the books upon the table.

"This is the way at last," said he, slowly. "I must get wisdom so that I can read the strange words." His eyes fell on a paper which lay upon an open book. It was written upon: these were the old man's words, — "The secret is mine. I have discovered the meaning of the characters"; but he had not dis-

closed the meaning, and now Chrif had his work to do from the beginning, for when he read other things that the man had written, he could not understand them: he must begin at the beginning. Chrif trimmed the lamp, and sat down to his work. The sun had risen without, but no window let its light into the room where he worked. He sat at the table, with the lamp swinging overhead, and studied the great books. Little by little they gave him knowledge, and he pored on, eager to read the mysterious writing. He forgot what he had come for; he forgot where he had been. The only good thing seemed to him to read the writing. The old man had read it, but had left no proof thereof, and Chrif said to himself, "He never read it; but I will read it." All that was in the heavy books he sought and pondered upon, until he could think of nothing else.

It was noon, and Chrif, weary with his labor, walked back and forth beneath the poplars to rest himself, but he continued to think about what he had read. The poplars gave little shade, but they shut in the path, so that he could tell exactly where he was walking. When he reached the end, he turned back, and then he turned again. The tops of the two rows of trees were

quite near each other, for though the trees hold themselves very erect, yet the highest branches must bend some; they were like the crests on soldiers' helmets, and the poplars shook their heads to each other, — "We know what it all means," said they; "we are keeping guard; but if it were permitted to speak aloud, we could tell much."

Once, when Chrif had reached the end of the walk, he heard wheels, and a wagon drove by, with a farming-man in it. The wagon halted, and the farmer said: "Good-day, sir, — fine weather"; Chrif hardly replied, — he only moved his head.

"The old man is dead, I suppose," continued the farmer, "and you are in his place. Well, I will tell you a story, — it is the same one I used to tell him, but he would pay no attention to it."

The farmer began, while Chrif walked slowly to the door, turning his back on the farmer.

"A husbandman, who had come to the end of his life, wished his sons to make a trial of farming; and, calling them to himself, he said: 'Children, I am now finishing my life, but you, if you search, will find in my vineyard what lies hidden there.' So they, thinking that a treasure-pot must there be buried, went to work

and dug up the whole vineyard, after the death of their father, and found, to be sure, no treasure-pot, but then the vineyard had been so well dug that it bore fruit most abundantly."

"That is foolish; it does not concern me," said Chrif, entering the door, while the farmer drove away.

Again he sat at the table, and applied himself to work with new ardor. The more intense his interest, the nearer did he seem to come to the object of his search, — the meaning of the mysterious letters. It seemed almost as if the books themselves helped him, and opened to the right places: the lamp increased its flame; his mind grew clearer; the hidden knowledge would soon be his.

The sun had not set when Chrif, trembling in every limb, rose from his chair, and approached the stone door. He had discovered the secret letters, — now could he read them on the door? More brightly the lamp burned, — the old ruins were full of light; the air was still, so still that he heard the creaking of the poplar-tops. A flood of light fell upon the mysterious letters as Chrif looked upon them, while the line above, which formerly he had read, now faded out of sight. Chrif, slowly, and to himself, — as if the poplars would hear and tell his secret, — read the words, —

"*Knock, and this door will open.*"

Chrif raised his hand, weak with trembling, and knocked once upon the stone door. It flew open, and he stood on the entrance. One shining spot he saw in the darkness within. It was the pot of gold. Chrif raised a cry of joy, and was pressing forward to seize it, when letters of fire burned upon its side, so that he drew back amazed. They burned through the darkness more brightly than the gold gleamed, and he could not but read:—

"*I am the Pot of Gold: think before thou seizest me: all things can I give thee save one. If thou hast me, thou canst not have that: close thine eyes; then if thou choosest me, open them again.*"

Chrif, obeying, closed his eyes. Ah! what were those sights he saw? what those sounds he heard? He heard the winds howling; he saw the snow covering the ground; he saw the boat-garden under the white shroud; the Red Inn deserted; a white form that glided past him, weeping low. "Rhoda!" he cried, and forgot the pot of gold with its flaming letters, the stone door with its mysterious signs, the heavy books, and the swinging lamp. He stretched forth his hand to grasp the gliding figure; it fled from

him, and he followed in the darkness, for his eyes were closed. Yet pursuing thus, a light, shed back from the flying form, shone through and illumined his eye; the figure vanished, but the light grew stronger, and led him on. On he went, down a mountain-side, into the tender valley. All about him, as the light increased, he saw the blessed fields and orchards; men sowing seed, and cattle grazing; boys and girls playing in the meadows. The broad light fell on all, and yet he saw as in a dream, with his eyes still closed. All was not there, he knew; something was wanting. He stopped, — he listened.

"Chrif, dear Chrif!"

The blessed light burst his eyelids apart, and, O joy! there stood Rhoda beside him.

V.

RHODA AND CHRIF.

"WHERE have you been so long?" said Rhoda, looking into his face. "I have been so lonely." He looked at her, and she cast her eyes down.

"So long!" said he.

"I had come at last to look for you," said she, timidly. "The winter was so dreary, and I said, 'When spring comes, I will seek him.'"

"Winter! spring!" said Chrif, aloud, and with wondering.

"It seems as though it had been all winter," said Rhoda. "When grandmother died, it was as though all were gone; but now you have come again."

"Dead!" said Chrif.

"She died a year ago," said Rhoda.

"Rhoda, you are dreaming," said Chrif, "or else I am. Winter! — spring! — a year! It was but yesterday that I left."

Rhoda looked at him, and smiled. They stood by the water-side, and Chrif, meditating these things, looked into its depths. There looked back two faces. Yes! they were Chrif and Rhoda still, but they were no longer little children. Then Chrif remembered all, and he walked by her side in silence.

They walked through the apple-orchard. The fragrance of the flowers filled the air, and the white blossoms that were blown from the trees sprinkled the grass, while some fell upon the two. They

talked of love, and Chrif thought nothing wanting, as he spoke of the trees and the blossoms, of the green grass and the balmy air; but Rhoda was silent.

"Is there anything needed," said Chrif, "to complete our joy?"

They followed the path; it passed through the churchyard, and led to the porch. Hand in hand they entered the church. Their lips were silent, for there were words spoken and sung. The minister stood in the desk, while mourners were below around the coffin of a child. The choir sang the triumph of the Son of Man over death. The minister spoke of salvation and the resurrection, and, leaning over the desk, he looked upon the congregation, saying, —

"Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

"But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected."

The mourners passed out to the grave, while Chrif and Rhoda went through the church, and out into the open air. Above them were the pines through which the wind passed. Their fragrance was breathed out, while the soft leaves lay upon the ground.

Again they spoke of love, and Rhoda whispered of what they had seen. "That alone is perfect," said she.

So they came now to the Red Inn. They entered the yard. There was the old boat-garden. Sweet-peas were in flower, and morning-glories climbed up the side of the house. They entered, and looked out of the one-eyed window, as they used. The Genius of the Weather stood firm. He was taking an observation, and he had positively affirmed that the wind should be west, and west it was. They rambled over the Inn, and walked out upon the gallery, where they looked off to sea. A thin voice called out to them from the road below. Chrif looked down. A pinched-up woman, with brooms on her back, was creeping along.

"Well, have ye found the pot of gold?" she asked. 'T was old Mother Bagg.

The Two Roses.

THE TWO ROSES.

IN the garden of the Princess stood a rose-bush, overhanging a pool of water; there were two rose-buds upon one stem, and ever since they had begun to uncurl their leaves, and to look out, they had fallen in love with each other. All the day they looked into the water, and so looked at each other, or rather at each other's reflection; but that was a great deal, and as much as they could do, for it was impossible for the rose-buds to turn their heads.

One day, they saw another rose-bud that hung below them, but had no companion, plucked off the bush by the gardener.

"That might happen to one of us," said the lover-rose, in alarm; "I could not bear to part from you, and surely the gardener would pluck you first, you are so lovely."

"It cannot be," said the maiden-rose; "we are both on one stem, and he never will separate us. We shall always stay upon the bush, and I shall see your face in the water."

"You know nothing at all about it," said a thorn on the stem, sharply. "Do you think you are always to stay looking into the water in that silly fashion? No, indeed! if your heads are not cut off like our neighbor's there just now, you will one day drop to pieces, and fall into the dirty water, and there will be an end of all your fine stuff."

"Do not let us believe him," said the maiden-rose.

"I shall not," said the other; "it never can be that we should be so unhappy. But I wish I might get nearer to you to touch you; then I should be perfectly happy; but now I can only look at you in the water."

The next day was a beautiful one, and in the early morning the maiden-rose felt so warmed by the sun, that she opened her leaves more and more, till she was by far the loveliest rose-bud on the bush. And so her lover thought as he looked into the water, but he could not get nearer to her. It was still early morning when

the gardener came again to the bush; he came up behind, and they did not see him, but soon the lover rose saw in the water the movement of a hand. Snip! and instead of two roses looking up from the water, he saw only himself; the gardener had cut off his companion.

"I told you so!" said the harsh voice of the thorn that had spoken before. "I knew she would be taken next. Now are you going to look into the puddle all day? I wish you joy."

There was a snail at the bottom of the bush, who lived by himself in his own shell; nevertheless, he was quite interested in the love affair of the two roses; he had heard them whisper together, and, being much older, and having no children of his own, he had decided to call himself their uncle, and look after their happiness; but it was unfortunate that the roses had always been so occupied with looking at each other in the water, that they had never seen their uncle, and he had not yet ventured to interrupt them by speaking; besides, he was too much interested in watching them. But now the snail felt it his duty to speak, and he thought it a good time to announce his relationship. So he spoke, coming part

way out of his house, that his voice might be heard better.

"My dear young friend up there on the rose-bush, you may not know it, but I am your uncle. That is to say, I have adopted you for my nephew, and so did I adopt your friend, whom you love. I am not your uncle by blood exactly, though I knew your mother very well. I am an old gentleman, and you will pardon me, I am sure, but I am in great concern about your young friend. Where did the gardener take her to this morning, and how soon is he coming for you, for now I suppose you are to be married? Speak out! you need n't be ashamed to talk about such matters to an old gentleman like me, and I am your uncle, too; that is, I call myself so."

The rose listened to all this, but he could not see the snail, his adopted uncle; but the snail spoke kindly, and so he answered: "O, my dear sir, my good uncle, if you will let me call you so—" ("Yes, yes!" broke in the delighted snail; "certainly, certainly!")—"if I only knew! but I never shall see her again!"

"Why, bless me!" said the old gentleman, nearly getting out of his house, in his astonishment; "you

don't mean to say you don't know where she's gone, and that the gardener did n't tell you anything about it?"

"O, if he but had!" said the rose, mournfully.

The snail was astonished. "Bless me!" said he again, nearly straining himself to get out of doors; "I never heard of such a thing! I thought it was all right. I must see the gardener instantly. I know him very well, and I assure you I shall not rest till I am satisfied. Keep a good heart, and all shall yet go well. Trust your uncle; that is, I call myself so. Good by!" and the snail started instantly to find the gardener, or, failing him, to see the princess herself, though he had said nothing about that to the rose, for fear he should be thought too presumptuous. He was obliged to carry his house with him, which was, however, rather convenient than otherwise, for he might have to spend several nights on the road.

Now the gardener had carried off the maiden-rose for the princess. She was that day to be married, and she wished a rose-bud — the most beautiful one in the garden — to wear upon her bosom. At the wedding all the court was present, for so she had ordered, and any one that chose might bring a gift. Almost every

one brought something, — something that was valuable, — and last of all came a poor poet. The usher would have put him away, for he was meanly dressed, but the princess held out her hand to him.

The poet blushed, but he put his hand in his bosom and drew forth a little poem, exquisitely written on cream-colored paper, but what was written was much more beautiful. "I have nothing to give, lady," said he, "but my own fancies. I have no other riches."

The princess looked at the poem, and at the last pearl that had been given; then she took the rose-bud from her bosom, and gave it to the poet, and said: "You have given me something of yourself; when I thank you, I too must give you something like your gift. You are a poet, and have fancies, but I am only a princess; you shall have something that I have worn."

The poet went home to his little chamber, and he carried the rose with him. "It will wither soon," said he, "but I shall never forget how it smells, nor how it looked when the princess gave it to me"; and he pressed it that he might keep it from falling to pieces. He made a little book on purpose to hold it, and wrote the story of it below in poetry, saying that it

was the guerdon of his art, and drew a blue line around the page. The rose longed to tell him her story, but she could not, and beside she was growing very faint.

This all happened of course long before the snail reached the princess, or even the gardener, for he went to both. He was two days and two nights making the journey, and he would not have reached the end of it then, if he had not climbed up into a wheelbarrow, which he knew the gardener would use soon. So the gardener wheeled him, together with some plants in pots, quite up to the door of the palace, only the old gentleman came very near being wheeled back again, he was so long in getting himself and house down to the ground. But there he was, and in a few hours he was at the door-step, though he felt somewhat puzzled then to know just what course to take.

A girl came singing by the door. It was Bertha, the gardener's daughter; and though she had no palace to live in, or maids to wait upon her, she was quite as beautiful as the princess, who, indeed, was very kind to Bertha. The girl stopped in her song, for she saw the snail, and she picked it up and put it in her pocket, thinking it would be a good plaything for her

little brother. She walked through the garden, and came to the rose-bush that hung over the water. She, too, looked into the pool for a moment and blushed; she was looking to see if the water stirred, for that was a sign that her love would not run smoothly; but the water did not stir, and she laughed, and, turning to the bush, picked a rose. It was the lone rose that had lost its companion. "Will Anton like it best in my hair, or in my bosom?" said she to herself, and she put it in her bosom and walked toward the wood.

"I too am picked," said the rose to himself. "Better so. I did not care to live alone, and who knows but perhaps I am to join her, as my uncle, as he called himself, said?" The snail, in the bottom of Bertha's pocket, heard this, but alas! though he spoke, and spoke encouragingly, it was impossible to make himself heard. Upon the bush, the thorn, who had spoken twice before, saw the rose picked.

"So you are plucked too, are you?" said he, jeeringly. "Good by to you! remember me to your love — when you see her!"

It was evening now, and quiet. Bertha came out of the woods, and Anton was with her, — Anton, the

poet; but she did not have the rose; he held it in his hand; the other hand held hers. They parted at the gardener's house, and the poet walked home; he passed the palace, and saw the princess within; she was dancing, and the jewels sparkled upon her. He smiled to himself. "She has her jewels," said he, "but I have the rose."

Then in his little chamber he opened the book which he had made to hold the rose which the princess gave him. "My Art's Guerdon," he read in the lines below; and on the opposite page he pressed the new rose, and wrote beneath, "Love's Grace," and drew a red line around it.

As he stood looking at the two, something dropped upon the table. It was the snail, the old gentleman that called himself the uncle of these two. He had crawled, with his house, out of Bertha's pocket, as she sat with Anton under the trees, and had fastened on to Anton's coat, for he wished to stay by the rose. The poet did not now remove him, for he was fond of snails. He stood there looking at the roses. The maiden-rose had still some consciousness, but she was very faint. She knew her lover, and he knew her. "We never shall part now!" said they to one an

other; and the snail saw it all, and was perfectly satisfied.

"I knew it would all come right," cried he. "Take my blessing, children, for I have a right to give it. I am your uncle; that is, I call myself so."

The poet shut the book.

"Now, at last, I touch you," said the lover-rose.

JOHN'S NAP.

JOHN'S NAP.

WHEN Mary had given her dolls their supper, and sent them to bed, she went up-stairs into the father's library, where she kept her grocery-store. It stood in a corner of the room, and any one could see just what it was, for it was fitted out in perfect order. In front was a counter, with scales, and behind it were shelves and drawers and chests. The drawers were for cloves and allspice, for tapioca and starch and rice; tumblers stood on the shelves, with sugar-plums; cheese was on the counter, and loaves of bread. Above was a clock, which said, as plainly as it could say anything, "No tick in this store." Now in front of the shop all day long stood John, the grocer, and all night he stood behind the window to keep thieves away. In his better days, he carried a candle on one arm, but the candle was

so heavy that at last he could carry it no longer, and his arm broke. So John had only one arm, but he was an uncommonly good-looking grocer for all that, with his green jacket and white apron, and so handy that he did up parcels as well with one arm as with two.

Mary found John standing in front of his shop, waiting for customers. She opened the drawers to see if anything had been sold. The two almonds were in the tumbler, where they had been for several days; the cloves were in the clove-drawer, and the raisins were in the tapioca-drawer, for the tapioca was all out. Everything was there, but it was no fault of John's that nothing had been sold, for he had been all day where he had been, rain or shine, for several months. He stood where he was told to stand, and so sometimes he stayed in front of the shop all night, waiting for customers, but, of course, none came; and when Mary came in the morning, there he would be, with his green jacket and white apron, as bright as ever, and yet he had not slept a wink. Even when he broke his arm, he was not put in the hospital.

It must have been that Mary remembered all this, for when she came up this evening, she suddenly said.

"There! John shall sleep to-night. He must be tired of standing, and I mean he shall have a nap. I don't believe any thieves will come." She looked about for a good place near by, for it would not do to have him go too far from the grocery-store. If anybody were suddenly to want some cloves in the middle of the night, — one of their rich customers, — John must be on hand.

She walked round the library until she came to some old and musty books that stood all of a height on the shelf, and were dressed in one suit of dingy leather, so that they looked like old soldiers, who had retired from active service on half-pay; and so they were, for Mary's father never used them now, but he gave them a comfortable home on the shelf, because they had once been useful. Mary lifted the green baize that hung over the tops of the books to keep the dust out, and, reaching in as far as she could, laid John out.

"Now go to sleep," said she; "I'll pull the bed-curtains down," and she let the green baize fall.

I said that John was so faithful that he did precisely what he was told to do, without asking any questions. Accordingly, he went to sleep immedi-

ately, although he knew perfectly well that Mary, without knowing it, had placed him on the very out side of his new bed, so that he was in danger of falling over in his sleep. And that is just what he did when Mary went out of the room, shutting the door after her. He fell from the top of the old soldier-books to the shelf on which they stood.

It was rather trying not to wake up, but John was firm. He had been told to sleep, and he said aloud: "I am quite sure I fell, and a good way too, but that's not my business. I've been told to sleep, — sleep's the word then." After a pause, he went on: "I really should like to know whether my arm is broken; it feels as the other did when the candle grew too heavy, but that will be attended to in its proper time; just now it's my business to sleep." So he kept on sleeping, as he was bidden.

The old soldier-books now spoke out, for they were facing the wall like all the rest; they spoke all together, when they spoke at all.

"What are you doing down there, little scamp?"

"I am sleeping," said John; "and I am no scamp, but an honest grocer."

"What did you get on our heads then for? We

tumbled you off. Did you break your arm? We hope so!"

"I don't know," said John. "I can't attend to more than one thing at a time. I'm sleeping now, and it's very hard work."

"What a fool!" said the old soldier-books to themselves, and they would pay no further attention to John, but reflected upon their insides, which were very curious. John slept on faithfully, though he heard some strange noises about him, for John's fall had brought all the neighborhood together, and there was quite a crowd around him. The arm was indeed broken off, and lay at a little distance from him. Four solemn beetles were examining it. They all shook their heads slowly, though they said nothing, but presently they walked off together.

"What's that for?" asked a bookworm of a friend, for there were a great many bookworms present, who had all come out of the books near by without any coats on.

"They're coming back again," he replied, for he didn't know either; and then they joined the crowd that had gathered round John.

Just then a shiner slipped through the mob. He

had come from the other end of the library, but that was nothing to him. "What's the matter with you?" said he, wriggling up to John till he stood on his green jacket.

"I 'm sleeping," said John.

"O, you are, are you?" said the shiner, and he slipped off, for he never can stay still.

"The beetles are coming back, as I told you," said the second bookworm, who had guessed at it. They brought eight others with them, so that there were twelve in all, and they surrounded the arm. The crowd now left John, and stood about the arm and the beetles.

"I wonder what 's going on," said he. "This sleeping is extremely hard."

"What 's going on?" asked the first bookworm.

"They 're going to take the arm to the hospital," said the second bookworm, positively, for he began to think he knew everything.

"We 're going to bury the arm," said one of the beetles, solemnly.

"Bury the arm!" said John, and he began to have bad dreams in his sleep.

The shiner, who had been all round the library since

he was there last, slipped along, and over John's face. "They 're going to bury your arm," said he, and was off again.

The twelve beetles went off with the arm, and all the bookworms went also to see it done, so that John was left sleeping alone. It was now twelve o'clock, and although the old soldier-books were in front of him, he could hear what was going on outside There was somebody at the grocery-store.

"Dear me!" said John; "I suppose somebody wants some cloves, and how am I to get out? and besides I was told to sleep. But perhaps it is the rich customer."

It was two mice who were out late at night, and, seeing no light in the shop, and thinking John must have gone to sleep, had stopped to help themselves.

"Cloves!" John heard one mouse say.

"Almonds!" said the other, and they were soon busily at work.

"Where 's John?" whispered one.

"Here I am," said John, as loud as he could· "I 'm asleep. O you rascals!"

"Then, if you 're asleep, we won't wake you," said they. "Pray don't disturb yourself." And they went on to the raisins.

Presently they left, and it was again quiet. "I wonder if they buried my arm," at last said John, for he continued to talk in his sleep. He heard the noise of a crowd coming that way. It was the beetles and the bookworms returning. The twelve beetles all stood round John, and shook their heads solemnly. The bookworms pushed nearer; but the beetles walked off together.

"What now?" said the first bookworm to the second.

"They give it up," said he, for he was afraid of guessing wrong, if he said what he did before. But they did not give it up, for they came back again, and fifty more came with them.

"What are they going to do?" asked the first bookworm of a by-stander, for he had lost faith in his friend.

"You will see presently," said he, in a knowing fashion.

"Are they going to take me to the hospital?" asked John. "I 'm well enough here."

"They 're going to bury you," said the shiner, who had just come round again.

"That 's it! that 's it!" said the by-stander, and every one thought he was in the secret.

"Shall I wake up?" said John to himself. "No!" said he, doggedly; "I was told to sleep, and I won't wake up."

The two and sixty beetles now stood round John, and held a council. Could he be moved? They had brought together all who were in the library, old and young.

"Let us try," said one.

"Now, then, all at once," said the head beetle, but John did not stir. The youngest beetle thought he felt him move, but no one else thought so.

"We must make a grave where he is," said one; but that was no easy matter.

"We will go home and think about it," said the head beetle, finally, and they marched off. The bookworms, too, scattered to their various books, for there seemed to be nothing further to see, and John was left entirely alone.

The next morning, after Mary had dressed her dolls, and given them breakfast, and sent them to school, she came up-stairs to the library to attend to her grocery-store.

"I hope there have been no thieves here while

John was taking his nap," said she. John heard this, and called out to tell her what had happened, but that she found out for herself. The almonds gone, the rice strewed about, and the cloves and raisins sadly mangled!

"The mice came while John slept!" said she. "That was too bad! Well, I hope he has had a good nap," and she went to bring him to his post. John was delighted, for he was rather tired of sleeping; it made his head ache, so much was all the while happening. When he was awake, everything went on smoothly.

But when Mary went to get John, she was somewhat puzzled to find him. There were a great many books in the library, and she had been round it two or three times before she had found a place to her liking. Now she went round and round again; she passed by the old soldier-books, and John, who heard her come, tried in vain to make her hear him.

"Tell her!" he cried to the old soldier-books. "Why don't you tell her?" but they had their backs to her, and beside they would have nothing to do with John, they despised him. She even lifted the green baize bed-curtain there, as in other places, but of course she did not see John, and how could she know

that he had fallen out of bed? She sat down on a chair, and looked all round.

"Where can John be?" said she.

"Here, here!" he shouted; "here I am, fast asleep, as you told me." But she did not hear him, and the old soldier-books got excessively angry.

That evening her father helped her hunt; he even took down the books next to the old soldier-books, but he did not stir those.

"I am afraid we shall have to give it up, Mary," said he; and she said, "O dear!" but that could not bring John back.

Alas, poor John! so young, and with so many groceries to sell, to be shut up with beetles and bookworms and shiners, with disagreeable old soldier-books standing guard over him. Days passed, and they had all given up looking for him.

"Well," said John, "there is nothing to do but to sleep," and sleep he did, without troubling himself any further about his neighbors. The bookworms looked at him occasionally, and the shiner generally passed that way, but the beetles never came, they were so hard at work thinking about him.

The year passed, — twenty years passed. The library looked much as ever, though the old soldier

books were rather more shabbily dressed. But the father was an old man, and Mary was married. O that was quite an old story. The two were together in the library, but the grocery-store was no longer there; the business was neglected after John disappeared, and the whole had been moved to the garret. Mary and her father were talking about what had happened many hundred years ago.

"I can tell you where we shall find something about it," said he, and he went to the shelves and took down the old soldier-books. A shiner slipped out, and ran back of the books.

"I believe I have not touched these books for thirty years," said he, wiping off the dust. When the books had been taken out, Mary saw something. She drew it out; it was an old dust-covered wooden doll. It was John, but he was still asleep.

"O, I remember!" said she. "When I was a little girl, I put this doll away among the books so carefully that I never could find it again. It was my grocery-man. Don't you remember, father?"

He smiled; no, he had forgotten it.

But John had slept so long that he did not know her. "Don't disturb me," said he; "I was told to sleep."

The Old House in the Wheat-Forest.

THE OLD HOUSE IN THE WHEAT-FOREST.

AN old, forsaken house, fast falling into decay, stood at the end of a field of wheat. An irregular path led through the field up to the door of the house, but no one entered the doorway, though it was open; the path ended there, because the field ended also, and there was a lane running past. It was an August afternoon, and the locusts kept up their z-ing sound all over the field. The wheat had grown so tall and so ripe that it would soon be reaped and sheaved. Therefore, this afternoon, it was rejoicing in the warm sunshine, and nodding its crests to every puff of wind. Months before, when the stalks had just appeared above the earth, a pair of ground-birds had built their nest in the field there had the mother-bird sat, and the father watched

and guarded; the wheat grew about their home, and kept it out of sight, so that, although the working men, who every day crossed the field, had worn a path which led but a short distance from the nest, it was never discovered, and never disturbed. Now, it was even more completely hidden; but the parent birds, and the one little bird that alone remained to them, had long ago left their home. The wheat grew while the birds flew off, until it was a perfect forest almost as far as one could see; and if the old occupants of the nest were to come back to their deserted home, they would find themselves wandering about in an almost impenetrable wood, whose tops far above them waved and rustled to the wind.

So high, indeed, had the trees of the wheat-forest grown, that two children, who walked along the solitary path, were wholly hidden from sight. There was not room to walk abreast, therefore the little boy walked in front, and the little girl behind. But where the path made a slight bend, some one had cut down a few stalks of the wheat, and they lay upon the ground at one side. It was an opening just large enough for the two, and here they stopped, and sat upon the felled wheat, with their baskets beside them.

They had come out to play, and had been gathering flowers and mosses.

"This is a clearing in the forest," said the little boy, who was called Jonas; "and here will we have our home."

"Well!" said the little girl, and her name was Lucy; "where shall we build the house?"

"Here," said he, "in this corner. But we must first have a log-house, for there is no saw-mill."

They took the wheat-trees that had been felled, and broke them into pieces, and with these they made a rude wigwam, which would have to answer until they should get more settled.

"Now let us have a garden," said Lucy. "We will have a kitchen-garden and a flower-garden; we will make the flower-garden first, so that it may be pretty in front of the house."

Then they emptied their baskets of flowers and moss. With the moss they made borders for the flower-beds, and a path to the house. They set the flowers out, sticking the stems in the earth, the flowers holding up their heads, and looking as brave and fresh as if they had always grown there.

"Now we must have a wheat-field," said Jonas, "for we cannot make bread of flowers."

So they planted a patch with the crests of the wheat-plants, but they did not stand very straight.

"See, I will make some butter!" said Lucy; and she pulled her buttercups off their stems, and made a golden heap.

"We will have cows," said she; "and oxen," said he; "and lambs," said she, "and hens."

"Now we must build a barn," said Jonas; and they broke off more of the wheat-stalks.

The children were too busy with their play to hear what was going on not far off. Nevertheless, there was a something going on. The two ground-birds, who once lived in the field before the wheat-forest had grown up, had come back to visit the old homestead, and their young one was with them. They flew over the tops of the wheat for some time before they could discover their home, it was so completely hidden, and the place was changed so much; but at last they found it, and they alighted, and hopped in and out of the old nest.

"How the place has changed!" said the mother. "I should scarcely know it, but the nest is the same, only somewhat the worse for wear."

"I knew it as soon as I saw the black stone," said

the father. "Many a time have I perched on that stone while the mother sat in the nest. Yes, and here is the very spot where I found that shining beetle. Do you remember, mother, I brought it to you just after the egg was hatched?"

"Yes," said she, and she nodded to the young one; "you may well believe those were long days before you broke the shell. It was in this very nest that you lay."

"The forest was not half so high when I remember," said the young one. "I recollect the first day that I flew over the top."

"And yet," said the father, "though you would hardly believe it, there was not a tree in the forest when we built the house. But that only shows how old your mother and I are grown. We have come to point out the house where you were born. It is yours. We may not be here next spring. There is no saying; but you will come at any rate. A very little pains will put everything in order. I flatter myself that the house is not so badly built; and it is a good place for worms and bugs."

"The forest will be so high then that I shall not be able to get at the house at all," said the young one.

"But it is rather a good place, if one only had neighbors."

"I know something," said the father. "I am older than you; the forest will soon be cut down, and it will be here as when we first came last spring. You can easily find the place by the black rock."

It was while the family of ground-birds was thus chattering, and while Jonas and Lucy were building houses in the clearing, that others came into the wheat-forest, and walked along the path. It was an old couple, who were also revisiting former scenes, but they were alone. The old gentleman was white-haired, and carried a gold-headed cane, which he swung just as regularly as if it were one of his legs. His wife followed behind, and held up her dress carefully.

"This was once all a forest, do you not remember, wife?" said he. "I was a boy when it was cleared, and I remember very well going with my grandfather to help stake the wood. We lived, you know, then in the old log-house."

"I never saw that," said she.

"No! it was pulled down before you came here to live. But you have not forgotten the flower-garden, which remained long afterward."

"It was full of hollyhocks," said she.

"Yes; grandmother thought they kept off the fever. But halloa! what is this?" and he stopped.

"Grandfather," said little Jonas, "is that you? Don't step on our flower-garden. See! there is our house, and there are the barns, and this is the wheat-field."

"Well done!" said he; "and who is that little girl?"

"It is Lucy," said he, while she stood there blushing; "she lives in the red farm-house."

"It is Lucy Marron," said the old lady.

"Lucy Marron!" said the old gentleman; "why that is my old playmate, Sim Marron's granddaughter," and he gave her a kiss; "many a time we 've reaped wheat together."

"Where are you going, grandpa?" asked Jonas.

"O, we 're going to the old house. Don't you want to come too?"

So the children took their baskets, with what flowers were left, and followed. They walked in a line along the path, the grandfather, with his gold-headed cane, in front, and Jonas last. At length they emerged from the wheat, and entered the old house, which was, indeed, sadly dilapidated.

"Dear, dear!" said the old gentleman, and shook his head. "It will not last much longer. And yet, fifty years ago this very day, you and I stood in this room. Do you remember, Sarah?" and he looked at her with a smile.

"Well enough," said she; "as if it were yesterday. There stood the minister, and there, too, stood that tall Sim Marron, who nodded to all the questions."

"And it was in this room," said he, as they moved along, "that I first saw you. You were dressed in a plaid gingham, and wore one of those gigantic calashes that were in fashion then."

"I must have looked like a fright," said she.

"I did n't think so," said he, smiling. "But I remember how awkwardly I stood in the doorway, for I had not expected to see you. You had just come. I must have nearly scraped the soles of my shoes off, so anxious did I appear to get them clean after I caught sight of you."

The old couple had said these and many other like things often before; but to-day, and in the old house, they had every right to say them over again, and so they rambled through the rooms, and talked of old times, when the house was gay and they were young

Jonas and Lucy, too, played about the rooms, and found many long-disused pieces of household-ware. They were playing at getting dinner ready in the old kitchen, when they were called by the grandmother to leave with them, for it was sundown. They all left the solitary house, but they did not pass through the wheat-forest. They took the lane, and there they could walk abreast. As before, the old couple went in front, the grandfather swinging his cane regularly, and the grandmother holding up her skirts, while behind came the children, hand in hand, and carrying their baskets. They passed down the lane as the shadows deepened, and the still air seemed to fold as a garment over the woods and fields. The old house was left behind, and soon they were out of sight.

In the wheat-forest, too, it was deserted. The ground-birds, old and young, had flown away, and the little nest lay hidden as before among the wheat-stalks. In the clearing stood the house of wheat-logs yet, and the barns, and the drooping wheat. But the flowers that stood before so bravely, and held their heads so loftily, now hung down, shrivelled, so that the clearing seemed deserted and forlorn. The wheat-forest itself moved gently in the light wind, and bent its crests

toward the old house, as if nodding it familiarly a good-night. And the old house, just now so merry with the tread and voices of the children and the grandparents, stood silent: the soft air passed through it, and upon the doorstep of well-worn stone a cricket chirped, and was answered by others near by.

Many thoughts, doubtless, came to it, called into being by the visit of its old inmates. It was older than they, but no one observed its birthday, and yet this was its birthday. Yes, to-day the old house was a hundred years old; but those who had feasted there when the doors were thrown open to the warming, as it was called, had long since passed away, and even their sons were now old men. But for all that, although the birthday of the old house was not remembered even by those who had just visited it, yet in its heart of oak it was full of kindly feeling. It looked out upon the wheat-forest.

"Yes! the wheat nods to me; once the forest-trees bent over me, but I was young then, and they were old. Now it is I that am old, and the wheat is young. Nothing can remain young but our hearts. There love is, and love is everlasting. Yes! the couple that were married here in the parlor, just fifty

years ago, are old now, but their love has left their hearts young. And the children who were with them, and who went away hand in hand, for out of my garret-window I saw them, they are young and will grow old, but love will never grow old; love will never die. The wheat will be cut down, as the forest before it. New seed will be sown. The birds that were here last spring have gone away, but there will be new ones next spring. And I shall one day fall down, and no doubt a new house will be built here, and there will be weddings in that. Ah! it is eternally beautiful, for love is eternal."

Then the moon rose, and entered without hinderance the old house. It filled it with light. In the village, the people slept. The old couple slept, and dreamed of their wedding-night fifty years ago. Lucy and Jonas also each were asleep and dreaming of one another. The moon visited them all. But the old house was better off. It was not asleep, and it seemed to it as if all that had gone before was less beautiful than this night, for it remembered the years gone, and it had its present joy.

"It could not be more perfect," said the old house. and the wheat-forest nodded familiarly.

Widow Dorothy's

New Year's Eve.

WIDOW DOROTHY'S NEW YEAR'S EVE.

I.

THE OLD LADY AT HOME.

THE Widow Dorothy and her house were made just about the same time, and for nearly eighty years had stood all sorts of weather. The house had grown to her like a shell, and it was a shell crusted with barnacles inside and out, one might say. There had she been born, just as it was finished by her father; there the father and mother had died; from it had moved away her brothers and sisters, who went off to the ends of the earth, and were all dead now; there she had been married, and there had she lived ever since, seeing, one by one, husband and children leave the threshold, some going to their long home, some, like their uncles and aunts,

going to the ends of the earth. The memories of these were as barnacles clinging to the old shell of a house, and in it lived old Widow Dorothy, with one little servant-maid, Charity by name, and charity by education, for she had been brought up in the poor-house, till the happy day when the widow took her home to live with her.

To have torn down the old house would have been to tug at the old lady's heart-strings, which were fastened to every beam and rafter of the building, and yet, every day, people who passed by shook their heads, and wondered what the old lady was thinking of, that she did not sell the house and land, and grow suddenly rich, and even put up a brown stone house like her neighbors, five stories high, with velvet carpets on every floor, and all the modern improvements; instead of which, she must live in a shabby old wooden house, in the handsomest street in the city, with a front-yard full of hollyhocks, and a back-yard where the neighbors could see the white-headed Charity jumping up and down to jerk water out of a stubborn pump, as tall as a small monument.

For all that people talked so, and indeed worried her with such offers to buy, that the old lady put up a

placard on the gate, "Not for sale; inquire without," Widow Dorothy lived on contentedly, her only discomfort being that some day, when she should be carried out of the gate to return no more, the dear old house would be torn down, the wave of city magnificence washing away the barnacle-covered shell. However, this was only what she thought of once in a while; she was too sensible to hook in troubles from next year, as she said, when she had plenty lying about handy, if she only wanted to use them. And, besides, she lived in hope that one day her youngest boy, George, who had left her years ago, would come back and live in the old house when she gave it up.

"When I do come back, mother," he had said, laughing as he stood on the doorstep taking leave, "it shall be on New Year's Eve, in time to sing the old year out and the new year in with you"; for that had been the custom from time immemorial in the family, and to this day the widow observed the last night of the year with the greatest ceremony possible, and started off in company with the New Year in so lively a fashion, that Charity, in her small mind, firmly believed that upon New Year's Eve, which came, she

knew, but once a year, people were turned, like an old carpet, and used on the other side.

Now the eve had once more come round, and it was once more in the wooden house, just as it was of course everywhere else. But it was more cheerful there than in many places; more cheerful, certainly, than outside, where the sleet was driving, as if wrapping up the old year to get him off at twelve o'clock, before the new year should come in; more cheerful than in many other wooden houses in the city, which had no stone houses, except warehouses, for neighbors; and indeed, more cheerful was it in the widow's wooden house, I make no doubt, than in some of the great brown-stone buildings that looked down on her little shell. The outside was white with rime, and the grotesque heads that grinned from their places atop the water-spout, had each an icicle beard and frosty hair, but then all this only made the house within more exceedingly bright and inviting. Inviting it surely was in the warm room where the widow and Charity were in readiness, but where was the company? The fire burned on the hearth, candles stood along the room at regular intervals, blinking at each other, the chairs were placed about in an amiable way

so arranged that when people sat down they might instantly begin talking, for every chair had its neighbor; the grim chest of drawers, with its brass paws, leaned against the wall, and looked on, and so did the great presses, with their frowning mouldings; while in the very middle of the room, as if it had walked out to get a better view, stood the tall, solemn clock. But where was the company, for it certainly was a company night? Perhaps the widow and Charity were waiting for them. The clock was just upon the stroke of eight, and they were sitting quietly, knitting blue yarn socks. The old lady was in her great chair, dressed in her stiffest black-silk dress, with her whitest cap, starched till you could hardly bend it upon her head, spectacles on nose, and her fingers making the steel pins fly toward the toe of her unfinished sock; while in a straw chair, so high that her toes only just touched the floor, and so straight-backed that one would know it was an obstinate set of men who made and used such chairs, in this sat Charity, dressed in a cotton gown, with a waist just under her arms, her white hair tied in a good hard knot, and her fingers racing with the widow's. But though she looked as if glued to the back of her chair, she could not help at

times squirming in her seat, yet never a word did she speak. Click! click! went her needles. Click! click! went the old lady's needles. It was as if they were knitting for a wager; the balls of blue yarn lay on the floor, and every few moments were jerked for more yarn, which the steel pins seemed to bandy back and forth between them, each taking turn in holding the sock. The clock neared the hour, faster flew the needles, the toes were reached, and just as the bell sounded its eighth stroke: "There!" exclaimed each, and the socks were finished.

But where is the company? O, the Widow Dorothy and Charity have looked out for that! This is strictly a family gathering, and none outside, save little Charity, can be admitted. Eight o'clock is the hour for assembling, and the evening is to end when the New Year is ushered in. Not once had the custom failed, even though one after another had dropped away. Some might come back, the widow had said, year after year, and now she said: "Perhaps to-night George will come back, and everything must be as it used to be." So here she was ready for him, and any time he might come right in and join the sport.

"Now, Charity," said the old lady, as they put away

their work, "just unfasten the bolt, so that George can come in without knocking, and then come, and we 'll play stage-coach."

Charity unbolted the door, and wished that George would that moment come in. She had made up her mind how he looked. He was tall and handsome, and wore a cap with a tassel, and a yellow waistcoat, and a blue coat with gilt buttons, — exactly like a prince, as she said to herself. But no such person did come in, and she went back to play stage-coach.

"Remember now, Charity," said the old lady, "that you are Alice and Julia and Nathan and Mary and Moses, and I am grandmother, who tells the story, and Uncle Ned and Aunt Elizabeth and Aunt Rebecca and Uncle Frederick. Alice is the door, Julia is the wheels, Moses is the driver, Nathan is the old gentleman on the back-seat, and Mary is the servant-girl on top with the bandbox."

"Yes 'm," said Charity, catching her breath; "I remember; — O mum, which did you say Nathan was?"

"You should remember, child; let me see, Nathan was the driver; then I 'm the story-teller, and Uncle Ned is the Whip, and Aunt Rebecca is the trunks,

and Uncle Frederick is the pole, and Aunt Elizabeth is the steps. George shall be the horses when he comes in. Now then, be sharp, Charity."

"O, which was I, Mrs. Dorothy?"

"Charity! Charity! you are nothing yourself. But you must remember when you are Alice, and when Julia and the rest. So attend!" and Charity, with her hands on both knees, leaned forward, ready to jump at a venture when any part of the stage-coach was mentioned. The old lady began her story, and she told a famous one, and kept the door swinging, and the elderly gentleman on the back-seat calling to the maid with the bandbox, while the driver used the whip so furiously that the horses dashed down the road, upsetting the coach, passengers and trunks. Little Charity was perpetually hopping up and down, and turning round and changing seats with the old lady, until the knot in her white hair came out, and she looked like an old-fashioned witch in her excitement. This lasted a long time, and left them all, for were they not nearly a dozen? quite out of breath.

The old lady sat again in her chair, fanning herself and looking toward the door, while Charity smoothed herself out, and began to chatter to the widow quite

as if she were no longer Charity, but one of the children for whom she had stood.

"What if he should come in, ma'am, right through the door at this very moment?" said she, staring straight at the old lady.

"Well, I know what he 'd like. He 'd ask for roast apples, and you may get some, Charity, and put them in the ashes." And while the apples were roasting, the old lady sat and looked at the fire, as if the little flames would shoot out into the faces of those she loved, while Charity also in her chair stopped talking, and looked as hard at the roasting apples, watching the rich juice ooze out through the crackling skin. Charity had fancies, too. She began to think how this wonderful George, who was exactly like the prince in a fairy tale, would come in a splendid coach, and a band of music, and the old lady would go off on his arm, while at the same time he would touch the room with a wand, and it would turn into a palace, and Charity herself would live in it. Dear me! what a foolish child she was.

The clock struck ten, and the old lady, who had long since stopped fanning herself, suddenly started up, and saw Charity in her chair, sitting like a drooping

plant, her head nodding over her lap. The widow got up softly and pulled Charity's ear.

"Wake up! wake up! why, what if George should come and find you asleep! and, I declare, you have let the apples burn to a cinder."

"O mum! mum!" said Charity, starting up; "he had just come this blessed minute, in a gold coach, and I was wondering where you were when you called me."

"Then be all ready, child," said the old lady, laughing, "and till he comes we'll play a game of battledoor and shuttlecock, to keep you awake. But recollect you are Moses now. Moses was very fond of the game. We kept it up one New Year's Eve fifteen hundred times, and then Moses broke his battledoor for fear he should be the first out."

But the new Moses was more likely to break the battledoor before the fifteen hundred was made, such an excited little player!

The old lady took her place at one end of the room, and held the battledoor with a determined air, as if she were going to fight against powers of the air. Her tall figure, for she was very tall, topped by her starched cap, looking like snow on the top of a moun-

ain, swayed back and forth as she thwacked the shuttlecock, never missing her blow, and striking the bird with a regular pat each time. Charity, like a little old woman, as she was, stood at the other end of the room, but she never stood still for a moment. She flew at the shuttlecock with her battledoor, banging it as if she had some spite against it, and sending it wildly about the room, though the widow always keeping in one place, never seemed to be out of reach of it. Charity's knot soon came out again, and, with her white hair falling round her face, and blinding her, she danced about, shrieking out whenever she nearly missed, and knocking her knuckles and the battledoor against all the chairs and presses near her.

"There, there, that will do, Moses," said the old lady, out of breath, as Charity hit the battledoor, shuttlecock, and her knuckles all at once; "you will smash everything, child. We made two hundred that last time. Now I must cool off, for I 'm all in a flurry," and she took to her great chair again. "When I was a girl," she went on, as Charity smoothed herself out, "there were n't many who could put me out in battledoor. But, dear, dear! I 'm growing old. I 'm just like a shuttlecock that has been batted back

and forth; there are n't many feathers left in me Pretty soon I shall be thrown away in the dust-heap." Charity stood aghast at these words, which she took just as they were given.

"O I hope not, mum," said she, energetically. But Widow Dorothy had somehow got on a melancholy strain, and she indulged herself in it while Charity sat staring at her, and shaking her head ruefully. But battledoor and shuttlecock were too much for both. The old lady's words became fewer, and Charity, who had set her head wagging in dismay and reproach, now kept a nodding the other way, as if she agreed to all; but her eyes were shut, and so were the widow's. Yes, both had fallen asleep in their chairs, and this time so very soundly that the old clock sounded eleven in vain.

"Wake up! wake up!" it said, in alarm. "Widow Dorothy! Charity! you will sleep over! wake up, I say!" But they did not wake, and the eleventh stroke died away in a tremulous shake, and now only the solemn tick that never stopped was heard from the tall clock. The old lady and the little old woman were sound asleep, and yet at this very moment the company was coming. Wake up! Widow Dorothy

company for you! Wake up! little Charity, company for *you!* Never fear, good folks, they will awake and welcome you.

II.

THE OLD YEAR OUT AND THE NEW YEAR IN.

TOCK! tock! sounds from the great timepiece. It knows very well what is coming. Its tall door opens a crack, and a face peeps out. That is Moses. He looks at the old lady, and then nods his head and steps softly out from the clock-case, followed by a troop of others. Bless me! what a merry company! They were all there, all Widow Dorothy's brothers and sisters and children and parents and husband, — all who had ever lived with her in the wooden house, and played sports on New Year's Eve; and George was there, little black-eyed boy! They stole out on tip-toe, — here was the old lady's company, and she fast asleep! But don't be so sure! There she sat in her chair, which was turned toward the room, and her face had a quiet smile. O, no doubt she knows more about it than we guess. Then

the frolic began. They danced round the old clock, that still went on with its solemn tick, not stopping even for these pranks, though the man in the moon upon the dial looked on in amazement. They played all manner of games, and laughed and sang and gave riddles and told stories, — the old widow heard it all, though the room seemed still. But in the midst of it all there came a shadow, not playing with the rest, but looking on from the wall; and when it appeared, little black-eyed George faded out of sight, and was missed in the group; the smile on the old lady's face also died away, and yet it came back at times as the merry company played about. Nor was it only play. The scenes were constantly changing. Now it was a wedding, now it was a funeral, now it was a good-by, but all the figures flitted about, taking places in the scenes.

All this while Charity also sat asleep in her chair. Well, she had her company too, little thing. The clock-case opened for her, and out came trooping a host of little children. But, ah! so ragged and pinched and forlorn, so cold and chattering! they were attended by men and women, too, who talked and smoked as the children played with stones and

sticks and mud, building little houses, and trying to make the scanty sunshine turn their stones to gold. Charity was not in the wooden house either, for her company called her away to the great brick poor-house, — she must play with them there, and be cold and ragged and pinched with them. Indeed, poor Charity looked woe-begone enough ; her face quite troubled and worn. But out of the clock-case stole for her, too, not a shadow, but a bright, little gleam that came into the poor-house, and into the midst of the children, the men, and the women. It shone upon the brick walls, and without, they were changed into the quaint wooden house with the comical heads laughing down upon her from the water-spouts. It touched the group, and all vanished, while old lady Dorothy stood in place of them all, and now in the old room she had her company, which was no other than the old lady herself, and the troubled look went away from Charity's face, and did not come back again.

The old lady's company was getting very noisy and confused. Moses was hitting the shuttlecock most furiously ; he had made fourteen hundred and ninety-nine, while, strangely enough, Charity thought herself

asleep, and that the old lady was stealing up to pull her ear. "Fifteen hundred!" cried Moses, and struck his battledoor against the clock with a crash to break it. The Widow Dorothy started up from her seat, — in an instant the company was all back in the clock-case, and there lay Charity in a fright on the floor, for she had fallen off her chair. The old clock pointed at five minutes to the hour of twelve.

"Charity! Charity! Charity!" shouted the widow; "get up, there's no time to lose," and, indeed, the clock was keeping on with its tock! tock! most steadily. But both were wide awake, and Charity had scampered to the closet, and brought forth some famous mulled cider that stood all ready. Three glasses were filled and placed on the table. Then Widow Dorothy and Charity took hold of hands, looking wistfully toward the door of the room for George.

"He can join us," said the old lady, "when he comes in," and she cleared her throat, and Charity cleared her's to sing the old year out. Auld Lang Syne they sang, and it would be hard to say which voice was higher. They marched round the clock, which never stopped to take breath, though it had so nearly come to the end of the year.

"Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?"

So they sang and asked each other, the old lady nodding her white cap, and looking earnestly at little Charity, who was singing with might and main, and twisting about so astonishingly that all her bones seemed to keep time with the music, and her knot became untied, so that her white hair again fell over her face, while she tossed it about in a frantic fashion.

Whirr! went the clock. It was lifting up its hammer. In a minute, the Widow Dorothy and Charity had each a glass of cider, and, as the clock struck forth so clearly its twelve notes, they drank to the memory of all absent friends, though who in the world little Charity drank to, it would be hard to say, unless she meant George. Both looked for him, but the door did not open; they had drunk their cider, and the twelfth stroke had sounded.

And now they sang the New Year in.

Still holding hands, but in a soberer way, they marched round the clock, looking at each other, and singing in a high key, to a quaint tune, —

"Come, let us anew
Our journey pursue,

Roll round with the year,
And never stand still till the Master appear.
His adorable will
Let us gladly fulfil,
And our talents improve
With the patience of hope, and the labor of love."

The old lady understood it all. She knew what the "patience of hope and the labor of love" meant, and Charity half understood it, though she had a secret wonder whether they actually were to roll round. But she was ready whenever Mistress Dorothy should set the example.

"Now Charity," said the old lady, kindly, "you may go to bed. I shall sit up a little while for George," and, though Charity declared she was not sleepy, she was posted off with her candle, and the widow took her seat in her great chair.

The New Year had come for both of them. They had started fairly with it. The old clock was still going on, and minute after minute they were moving toward another New Year's Eve. The old lady thought, — One year is much like another; but Charity thought, — I wonder what sort of a year the new year will be; it will, of course, be so different. Char

ity commenced hers by going to sleep almost as soon as she lay down. Her last thought had been, — I wonder what sort of a year the new year will be; and now it was as if the company she had had a short hour ago came trooping back again. Old lady Dorothy was there, nodding familiarly to her, and leading her down a long room, exactly like the one she had been in, extending for miles, and at the other end, waiting to receive them, was George, dressed like a prince, and there stood the clock also, pointing to twelve, while the three danced round it, only to find another long room beyond, down which they were all ready to start. It was delightful, and so she wished it ever would be.

The old year, going out, had brought a merry company to Widow Dorothy, — what had the new year to bring to her, as she still sat in her arm-chair? She was watching the door, but she also soon dropped asleep. Then once more the clock-case opened. The shadow came forth first, and moved about the room. It grew, and seemed to overcast all, until even the wooden house sank beneath it, and left but an empty house-lot. It kept away a hand from the door-latch, and seemed to frighten back the images in

the clock-case. But yet they did come out, half timidly; they built up what the shadow had destroyed, and even among them came the black-eyed George, lifting the latch, and entering.

Come! blessed little memory-children, and gather in the old woman's home: the new year's shadow shall not drive you wholly away. Come! nestle in the old woman's heart, and make the air light and shining, that the shadow may flee away. Come! little black-eyed George even, from the distance, and let not the grim shadow whisper in her ear that her boy lies beneath the green sod hundreds of miles away. Come! old year's children, and take again the new year's freshness; be young forever in Widow Dorothy's heart!

The Violet.

THE VIOLET.

THE artist Albert sat by the open door, painting a picture of clouds. Margaret was near him, his just-married wife. She was sewing while he painted, and the two talked when they liked. It was very pleasant; spring had commenced, and this was a bright morning; a few yellow butterflies were fluttering about, the trees had begun to put forth their leaves, and the garden, with its trim box border, looked as if it were ready to blossom at once.

"How perfect it is!" said Albert.

"And yet this is only the beginning," said she.

"I wish on such mornings," he went on, "that I could transfer it all to my canvas, but before I can catch the different parts. they have taken some new shape. Look at that cloud! I canr ·t follow with my brush its movement and change of form. And ever

the colors in the scene grow deeper almost while I am looking at them."

"Yes," said she; "summer is coming, and that is more glorious."

"I am content with spring, Madge," said he, laying down his brush. "To-day is perfect. Why should I ask anything better. You know I might be disappointed. No; I am perfectly happy to-day, — that is enough."

Again he took up the brush, and tried to make his canvas catch and hold the vaporous clouds. Margaret sat quietly by, and thought of what had been, their betrothal and marriage, and then of what was to come.

"God keeps the best to the last," she said to herself.

From the door where they sat, the gravel walk led to the end of the garden. There other matters were discussed. A blue violet had just opened its leaves, and the little trees of the box border, that separated the garden-bed from the walk, were quite interested in the event. They were old settlers, and had lived so many generations that of course they knew everything. But they were not the first to speak. Two hyacinths

stood on the other side of the garden walk. They were so tall, and the box was so short, that they could see over into the opposite bed, and so they caught sight of the new flower.

"Let us weep," said one of the hyacinths: "there is a new flower."

"Yes, let us weep," said the other. "No good will come of being born." So they wept together.

"I don't mind weeping too," said a dandelion that had got in among the box, and thought itself in very good society; "but I should like to know what for, first."

"There is a flower born," said the hyacinths; "a blue violet. Alas, poor thing!"

"O it 's poor, is it?" said the dandelion. "Well, that is unfortunate; but I sha'n't weep, on the whole."

"What 's all this nonsense about?" said the box.

"It seems there is a blue violet born," said the dandelion, "whatever that is, — some low creature, I suppose, — and our neighbors across the way pity the thing. They propose that we weep, but I 've concluded not to. It 's not worth while."

"Weep!" said the box, indignantly. "You know nothing about it, either of you. We have lived here

more generations than you have days, and we can tell you that the violet has done a very good thing in getting born, and, what is more, she is a friend of ours, and is of good stock."

"Well, that alters the case," said the dandelion; "so you may as well stop weeping, neighbors."

"Alas! alas!" said the hyacinths.

"You are a set of fools!" said the box.

"I agree with you," said the dandelion; "but then they are low-bred."

"No; they have n't edged their way in among us," said the box; and they turned their attention to the violet. The little blue flower had already begun to breathe the air and feel the sunshine, and had even had a visit from a yellow butterfly.

"It certainly is very beautiful," said she; "I had no conception what was coming."

"Well, then, be satisfied with it," said the box, good-naturedly. "You would better listen to us; we have known all about this for a long time. Take our advice, enjoy yourself while you can."

"Is there any end?" asked the violet.

"O we know all about that, too," said the box; "but it does n't concern you; just enjoy yourself."

"Yes, there is an end! Alas, alas!" said the hyacinths across the border.

"Listen to me!" said the yellow butterfly; "we will love one another; that is perfect, and we'll ask no questions."

"Love not, love not," said the hyacinths; and they began to weep again.

The dandelion spoke out, "Pooh! they are a set of fools. Listen to me and the box." The violet listened, yet the dandelion said nothing further. But the box went on.

"We've not lived so many generations for nothing. We know what is good for you. Ask no questions, but take things as they come. As for love, that's well enough, provided you make a good match. Keep what you can, and don't ask too many questions."

"But there must be something else," said the violet, "though I cannot say just what it is I want."

"To love me," whispered the yellow butterfly; but the violet turned away.

"There is nothing else but to die," said the Hyacinths, "make up your mind to that. The time will come, and then you will weep. You would bette weep now."

Steps were heard on the gravel walk, and soon Albert and Margaret stood by the garden-bed.

"Here is a violet in bloom," said she; "I think I should like it to stand on the table in a flower-pot." Albert took his knife, and cutting up the violet with the earth around its roots, placed it in the flower-pot.

"See!" said he, "there is a pupa at the root; we will see if it will hatch," and so he let it stay. The pupa had been there for a long time, but it was unable to take part in the talk, and no one could say whether it understood it. The violet hardly knew what was happening to itself, yet it felt a strange thrill.

"Perhaps," it said, as Albert carried it off, "perhaps the best is now to come."

"Now you will die!" said the hyacinths. "Alas! weep, for you will die."

"This is ridiculous," said the box. "She would better have stayed where she was. Well, she is gone, but we are here yet, and here we shall stay. Nothing like sticking to one thing. We don't grow very fast, but we grow sure. Let well enough alone."

"What's the news, neighbor?" asked the dandelion, who had got rather tired of the fuss. No one answered her, till the butterfly came near.

"Let us love one another," said the butterfly to the dandelion.

"Well said," said she, "and we'll ask the box to the wedding."

The spring day was over, and the night had come. Yes, the night had come. Albert sat alone in the house. He sat beside the sleeping Margaret, and he knew that perhaps she might never wake. The table stood by her, and on it was the little violet in the flower-pot. Albert had sat there without a word or tear. His face was like stone. But he thought:

"She will never wake. This is the end: I will die too, for why should I live? This morning we plucked the flower; to-night the flower lives, and she is dying. The flower will die, too, and that is the end. Let me die, there is nothing left for me. God good! what is the use of sunshine and flowers and clouds, if she is not living to enjoy them with me? Ah! let me die."

He heard a slight sound from the table near Margaret, a rustling, and then the pupa-case was broken, and a pure white moth floated upward, and descending again alighted on the violet. Albert wept. He thought of the stiff pupa that he had brought home in

the morning, and then of the white moth that rose from it.

"O God, thou art good," said he, falling on his knees; "she lives, let me live also." He arose, and stood by her head. The perfume of the violet ascended to him. "How sweet her life was!" he said to himself. "She loved God; she was a perfect flower. Shall I bear neither fruit nor flowers?"

He listened for her breathing. It had stopped. He felt her pulse, there was no motion. Then he lay down and slept, and when he awoke he worshipped God. The violet still stood by her bedside, and when she was buried, he planted it on her grave. But the moth had flown with the air.

The Magic-Lantern.

THE MAGIC-LANTERN.

ERD was the youngest of a family party that had gathered on Thanksgiving-Day at the grandfather's house, but he was the liveliest of them all. Not one dish on the great table did Master Ferd refuse; he played in every game, and yet, when evening came, and Uncle Jack showed the magic-lantern to the company, Ferd was wide awake, and saw everything. "The Peacock in contact with an Iceberg" was announced, but Ferd was rather disappointed when he found it was the ship Peacock. Then there were "The Drumming Lesson," "Mr. Bruin reading the Paper," "The Little Arithmetician," "William Penn's Silver Tea-Service," and many others entertaining or instructive. Last of all, Ferd saw on the wall a picture of a stage-coach, full of passengers inside and atop; the driver

on the box drove his galloping horses. The picture stood perfectly still upon the wall, but Ferd could fancy the stage-coach driving at full speed, till finally Uncle Jack shut the slide, and the exhibition was over.

This had been a long day for little Ferd, and now he was sent to bed, though he declared he was not sleepy; for all that, his eyes were shut as soon as his head touched the pillow. But when the older people had also gone to bed, and all was quiet, Ferd opened his eyes, for how else could he have seen the wonderful sight that the wall of his little bed-room showed? A light shone upon the wall opposite where he lay, so that it was perfectly distinct, and there, rolling from side to side, was a stage-coach, not unlike the one in the magic-lantern, except that now there was only the coach and driver and galloping horses, with not a soul inside or atop. Off it went, out of the light wall into the shadow, and it seemed to Ferd to go round the room, past him, and back to the light wall again, where it stood once more. But as it came into the light, Ferd saw inside one passenger. It was the grandfather! There was no mistaking the gold spectacles, and the gold-headed cane that the old gentleman

carried between his knees. He was in the inner corner of the back seat, and looked extremely comfortable.

The driver all the while sat stiff in his seat: the horses were galloping on, out into the shadow and once again round the room, as Ferd knew, until the coach-and-four stopped, just at the edge of the light wall, to take in another passenger. There she took her seat, — Ferd's grandmother, to be sure, right beside the old gentleman. She was dressed for a journey, with a green veil over her bonnet, a reticule in her lap, and a brown-paper parcel, which no doubt held sandwiches. O yes! she and the old gentleman were on the back seat, and going off for a journey. Away they went, out of the light, past Ferd, and round the room. When they came to the wall again, the coach hardly stopped, but up climbed a sprightly old fellow, whom Ferd knew immediately. Was it not old Will, who had lived in the family almost as long as the grandfather himself? He sat on the box beside the driver, with a corkscrew and a blacking brush in his hand. What now, Will? They are all right inside, and the coach is rolling off at the same rate round the room. This time two got in. They were Ferd's great-aunts, sisters of the grandfather. Aunt Cynthia had a

stocking she was knitting; Aunt Harriet had a black book in her hand and a bandbox in her lap. Ah! Ferd knew what was in that, — such heaps of ribbons and old head-dresses and bows and knots. But off they went.

"Now that was a load," said Ferd to himself, as he watched it disappear from the light wall. Where it went to he could not guess. It certainly did not, as before, go round the room, and yet presently, — there! right on the wall again was the stage-coach, the horses galloping, the driver holding the reins, and not a soul inside or out, when, just as he saw this, in jumped his father and mother, and took the back seats. He was counting the money in his purse, and she was sewing very rapidly upon some garment. Round they went, past Ferd again, and when they came to the light wall, the coach never stopped, and yet, in crowded and up climbed a whole party. Aunts and uncles squeezed into wonderfully small places. Uncle Phil sat by the driver, and the servant-maids were also on the top of the coach, hanging over the back. Uncle Luke, with his pill-boxes, Aunt Caroline, with her cologne-bottle, Aunt Margaret, with a bag full of old letters, and Uncle Edgar, with his

paint-box. These were all crowded inside, though Uncle Edgar had to sit on the straw at the bottom. Ferd saw Uncle Phil on top, with note-book and pencil in hand, turn to the driver as if he said, "How are the roads?" but the driver only looked straight ahead, held the reins tight, and off were they, — Aunt Caroline being the last he saw, for she put her head out of the window, and made a motion to speak to the driver.

"Perhaps he will stop," said Ferd to himself. Not he! on he drove, Ferd could not tell just where, for, as before, the coach disappeared, and did not come round him; and yet, very soon, there it stood, the horses galloping, the driver sitting stock upright, and no one inside or out. But, in a moment, Ferd saw a scrambling lot of boys and girls tumbling in at each door, and climbing up any way to the top of the coach. He was all alive to see them, for there were every one of his cousins who had been at Thanksgiving with him. They had tops, and balls, and graces, and hoops, and crochet-needles, and fans, and cricket-bats, and books, and silver watches, and slate-pencils, and thimbles, — every one had something. Two little ragged boys, moreover, who had fetched water that

day, had jumped on behind, while on top one could hardly see the coach for the valance of boys' legs that ran round the sides, while the picket-fence of boys' heads hid those who were stretched lazily on the roof of the coach. And there, beside the driver, sat Uncle Jack, who looked as much like a boy as any of them, but, though he and all were laughing and hurrahing, the driver said never a word, but held the reins firmly.

Something or somebody was waited for, since the coach, though the horses did not seem to stop galloping, never got beyond the light wall. Ferd saw one place vacant. There were all his cousins and Uncle Jack going off so merrily. O, he wanted to go too, and in a twinkling Ferd was climbing on to the top, Uncle Jack lending him a hand.

Hurrah, hurrah! it was driving like the wind. The stage-coach swayed back and forth, the little folks inside put their heads out all at once, the little folks on top kicked their heels upon the sides, and the driver sat still and minded his horses. But though they drove so fast, they were still in the light, and Ferd could see now more and more plainly where they were, and what was beyond them. They were in

a great magic-lantern. The light shone full upon them, but where the dusk was he could see crowds upon crowds of people, old and young, who stood and watched the stage-coach. It was people, people everywhere!

"How they are watching us!" said Ferd.

"Watching us!" said Uncle Jack. "Don't you see, they are all about their business, ploughing and hammering and stitching and reading; they have too much to do to attend to us, and we have too much to look after to mind their business. Hurrah! what a drive this is."

Nevertheless, Ferd still saw the people looking at them. The more he looked, the easier he saw them, and he thought Uncle Jack certainly wrong, for, besides the people, Ferd declared he could see through them, and each one was most extraordinarily made, — such springs and wheels inside! such an amount of varnish outside!

"Let me see how I look with all these people staring at me," said Ferd; and he looked at himself, and the sight made him wretched, — he seemed so poorly put together, and so shabbily dressed.

"Hurrah! how we drive!" said Uncle Jack, and

drive they did, till the light grew dimmer. "We are getting out of the light," said Ferd in alarm, and it certainly did grow rather darker to him.

"Out of the light!" exclaimed Uncle Jack. "Why, it's clear as noonday." Nevertheless, it was growing dark, Ferd knew, — and could n't he trust his eyes? As it grew darker, the voices about him sounded more faintly, even Uncle Jack's cheerful voice was not so loud. But Ferd could feel the coach-horses galloping away into the silent darkness. He strained his eyes to see the people, he looked again at himself. The darkness grew deeper, and the silence more profound. The voices of the children wholly ceased, — Uncle Jack's Hurrah! went out of hearing, — there was no noise. The people he could no longer see, nor his comrades nor the driver nor the coach nor the horses, and he could but just see himself. Yet Ferd knew when all was utterly silent and utterly dark, that he was galloping off. He kept his eyes open in vain, — he could not see himself even. He put forth his hand to feel some one, but touched nothing, — he tried to speak, but his mouth was closed: all feeling was gone; he was not aware of coach or horses or driver or comrades, but only that he was borne along galloping,

farther and faster. Ferd perceived that feeling also growing indistinct. Was he going or not? he could not say. He was in the midst of motionless darkness. He grew fainter and fainter to himself. "I am going out," he just thought. Ferd seemed to flicker, as if the next moment, — ah! and the flame would be out.

Lo! in an instant it was light again, broad daylight. Ferd raised himself and stared around; there was his mother smiling over him; she had just given him his good-morning kiss. In five minutes, Ferd was out of doors, and feeding what chickens remained after Thanksgiving-Day.

What befell the Range.

WHAT BEFELL THE RANGE.

WRITTEN FOR, AND INSCRIBED TO, M. P. S., A CHILD.

IT was an unlucky day when Yulee Robin tried to build a fire in her little leaden range; she made the fire burn, but alas! the poor range was quite melted out, and in a sad state of ruin. For all that, it had further adventures. So listen, and you shall hear.

Yulee brought it home under her apron, and hid it in a corner of the garret, until she could make up her mind what was best to be done. Next to it stood a pair of shoes. We know what the range had passed through: the shoes also had a history. They belonged to Yulee's older brother, Hopper Robin; he had hid them here the day before. They were shoes that gave him trouble. When his feet were in them, it was as if they were nailed up; when he walked about the

house, one would think the oxen had strayed in through the door; and when he marched down the church aisle, all the people turned and stared, and even the parson looked round the corner of the pulpit, for he could not see over it. Hopper had bought the shoes because he thought from their looks that they would last a long while; and that was just the worst thing about them. If they had given any signs of wearing out, he would have kicked about in them to the end, but they would not wear out. He wore them every day, in-door and out; he wore them Sundays, until, at last, as he started down the aisle, the people would all whisper, "Hopper Robin," and the minister in the pulpit would say to himself, "Ah! young Robin." He wore them weeks, he wore them months, and still, "The shoes look as good as new," said Hopper's father, and Hopper groaned.

"There must be an end to this," said Hopper, one night as he took his shoes off to see if they were wearing out. He went up-stairs in his stocking-feet, and groped his way to the corner of the garret.

"I hope I shall forget all about you," said he, throwing them on the floor, where they lay like stranded boats.

As soon as he was gone, the shoes got up and stood side by side, toes foremost, as grim as two andirons.

That he did not see, but he had a dream, and it was all about the shoes. He heard them come from the garret; they walked across the floor one step at a time; they came down-stairs, — glock! glock! they walked along the entry, and he heard them come nearer and nearer: he thought of the door, and remembered it was shut, but, at the next moment, he heard them kick it, each shoe once, and it opened, and they marched up to the bedside. It was horrible! Hopper tried to say, "What do you want?" but the words stuck in his throat.

"Get into us!" said the shoes, and he put his feet in, and the shoes tramped off out of the room, down-stairs, out of the house, and on to the hill, where old woman Troak lived, and old woman Troak came out with a hammer and some nails, and nailed his shoes on so they never could come off.

"I want a sixpence!" said old woman Troak; and it was just when he was fumbling for a sixpence, and wondering what would happen if he could not find one, that Hopper awoke in a fright, and found himself still in bed, and the shoes nowhere about. They were

up-stairs in the garret, where he left them, no doubt but he did not know that they were standing side by side, toes foremost, as grim as two andirons.

The next night, no sooner had he fallen asleep than he dreamed exactly the same thing, and awoke at the same point, in just as much of a fright. So it was the next night after. Then he went up into the garret where he found the shoes, standing side by side, and Yulee's broken range near them. He thought she must have stood them up. But he had determined to be rid of them, for he was not going to have them come down-stairs every night, and carry him off to old woman Troak's. He set them near the fence outside of the garden-gate.

"There are plenty of tramps that pass here every day," said Hopper to himself; "and some one will walk off with the shoes. *I* put them out here to see if the sun won't soften them. They 're too good to give away, but if anybody steals them it 's not my fault." So Hopper put his shoes by the fence on the roadside.

Now, it was that very day that Yulee decided to get her range mended. She knew exactly where to go, but she had waited till she and her little brother

Bo had saved up as much money as they thought would pay for the mending. In the garret she missed the shoes.

"Hopper must have been here," said she; "I hope he did n't see the range." She hid it under her apron, and walked along the road, Bo with her.

"What shall we do if there is n't lead enough?" asked Bo. "Do you think they 'll mind giving us a little?"

"O, I 'm sure there must be enough," said Yulee; and if there is n't, I 'll stay, and you can run back and coax Hopper to give you some."

"Let 's look," said Bo, "and see if it 's all here."

So they sat down on a stone, and Yulee carefully opened a parcel. There was the range, or what was left of it, two or three spatters of lead, four battered lead spoons, a sinker to a fish-line, and a small end of lead-pipe.

"They 'll melt it all up together," said Yulee, "and then pound it out."

"Will they melt the range, too?" asked Bo.

"No," said Yulee; "they will melt the spoons and the pipe and the sinker together, and then pound it up and stick it on where the range is broken.

"And the spoons will look just like the sinker?" asked Bo.

"Yes; that is the way they looked before they were spoons," said Yulee, wisely.

They walked on for a quarter of an hour.

"Here we are," said Yulee.

"What a racket!" said Bo.

"They are pounding lead, I suppose," said Yulee.

Banger! banger! banger! went the hammers, for they had come to the great forge.

"Let's count the money, and see if it's all here," shouted Bo; for there was such a noise they could hardly hear each other talk. Bo, in fact, was a little frightened, and was in no hurry. They sat down again, and Yulee drew a little bundle out of her pocket, which she opened carefully. One, two, three, four, — six great copper pennies; they each counted, and all were there.

"Now, then, come!" said Yulee; and she marched boldly on, while Bo began to take hold of her frock.

"I'm afraid they won't hear the bell," said he; "they make such a noise pounding."

"Then I shall go right in," said Yulee; "the door is open."

"But perhaps there 's a dog!" shouted Bo.

"He 's chained!" she screamed, encouragingly.

But they had come to the open door of the forge, and Yulee stood in front of it, while Bo half hid behind her.

Banger! banger! banger! went the hammers; and Yulee even began to be a little dismayed, as she saw the fires and the swarthy men flitting back and forth.

"Where's the bell?" said Bo, with a scared voice, in Yulee's ear.

"O Bo!" said Yulee, starting. "You frightened me so." Just then the foreman came toward them. He was a prodigious man, and wore a yellow flannel cap on his head, and carried a piece of iron in his hand.

"It 's a giant!" screamed Bo, and, letting go of Yulee, ran off roaring. But Yulee stood courageously still. The giant was not so horrible but that he could smile.

"What do you want, little girl?" said he.

"Now 's the time," thought Yulee, and she produced her bundle. The hammers pounded furiously, and she had to scream at the top of her voice, catching breath when she could. "I want to get this mended — and I 've brought some spoons — and a sinker —

and some lead-pipe — and you can pound it all up, and if there is n't enough, I can get some more." Here she took breath, and then bringing out her other parcel, went on, — "And here 's six cents to pay for it; and if there is n't enough, I have a cent a week for keeping my hair back — and one cent a week when I don't get inkspots — and Bo has a hen that will lay eggs pretty soon — and he is to have twelve cents a dozen — "

Yulee was red in the face and out of breath, or she might have gone on much longer. The giant heard it all, however, and took the range and the spoons in his great hand. Ha! ha! he laughed, till the hammers even seemed to laugh back.

"It is n't in my line," said he at last; "carry it to the tinman's. Perhaps he can mend it. You 're a nice girl," he added, and, stooping, the giant actually kissed Yulee. Bo saw all this from afar, but of course he heard nothing, and when he saw the giant stoop, he gave up Yulee for lost, and, fearing his turn would come next, started at a run for home. Yulee saw him, and set off in chase. "Bo! Bo!" she screamed; but he only heard the hammers calling out, as he thought, "Catch him! catch him!" Yulee caught him at last.

and they were both so much exhausted that they could n't speak for some time; but sat by the road-side on a log, panting and coughing. Finally Yulee made out to tell him how matters stood.

"We must now go to the tinman's," said she. "I know where it is. I wonder I did n't think of him before: he has stoves in his shop. To be sure the tinman's is the place."

"But the range is lead," said Bo, "and the spoons and the sinker and the pipe."

"That 's no matter," said Yulee. "Lead or tin, it 's all the same."

The tinman's was a little farther on, and in that direction they walked. They had not gone far when they saw some one coming toward them. Bo, who had not got over his last fright yet, began to grow timid again.

"Why, it 's only an old woman, Bo," said Yulee; "she can't hurt you."

It was an old woman, — it was old woman Troak. She had a bag on her back, and an iron hook in her hand, and she looked this way and that as she walked.

"How do you do, my little darlings?" said she, as she came up to them.

"Let 's run!" whispered Bo.

"Are you going to the store?" asked old woman Troak. "What is the pretty bundle you are carrying?"

"It 's my range," said Yulee. "We 're carrying it to the tinman's to be mended."

"Let me see it, there 's a dear," said old woman Troak; and Yulee opened her parcel, and displayed the treasures.

"I 'll mend it for you," said old woman Troak. "The tinman can't do it. He don't know how." And she held out her skinny hand.

"Can you do it now?" asked Bo, plucking courage.

"Why no!" said Yulee; "she wants to have a fire, so she can melt the lead, and pound it together."

"That 's it! that 's it!" said old woman Troak, nodding her head; "but I want a sixpence for mending it."

"Is n't that nice!" said Bo; "we 've got just enough." Yulee unrolled her six great coppers, and gave them to old woman Troak, who put them into her pocket, and the range and spoons and sinker and pipe into her bag. "Good by, darlings," said she, and shuffled off.

Yulee and Bo now ran home, for it was near dinner-time, and the old woman followed after.

"When shall we get it?" said Bo, as they came up to the house.

"She'll bring it when it's done," said Yulee, though she did feel some misgivings. It was, however, dinner-time, and they were all at the table. Her father and mother and grandfather and Hopper were all there.

"Hopper," said his father, "I have n't heard those shoes of yours the last day or two. You have n't worn them out, have you?"

Hopper reddened. "I am trying to soften them," said he; "they are out in the sun." No, they were not, as he found after dinner, when he went to see if they were still there. "Hurrah!" thought he. "They 're gone!"

I 'll tell you a secret. Old woman Troak took them, and they were in her bag, and Yulee's things were with them.

It was now nearly evening. Yulee and Bo were playing about the yard. Hopper was cutting wood. Old woman Troak was not a great way off. She was by the road-side, on the way to the forge. She had

sat down to rest, for her bag was heavy. She opened it to see what was in it. She had found everything in the road, — old rags and papers and pieces of tin; but the shoes she had stolen from the front of a house, and a little leaden range, with four leaden spoons, a sinker, a piece of lead-pipe, and six copper cents, she had taken from a little girl. She remembered it perfectly, you may be sure. She had spread all the things out, and now she put them back; last she came to the shoes, but just as she reached out for them, the two shoes marched off. She chased them; they began to run and kicked up quite a dust.

"Lawk!" said old woman Troak; "they 'm bewitched!" And she took up her bag, and started off without them. But no sooner did she turn than they turned also, and marched after her. She walked faster, and did not dare look back, but she heard the shoes come heavily after. All a-tremble went old woman Troak's heart. Stomp! stomp! came the shoes. She began to run; pit-pat! pit-pat! sounded the shoes behind her. She put her hand in the bag and drew out the range.

"Take it!" said she, and tossed it behind her. Stomp! stomp! still came the shoes. She pulled out the sinker, piece of pipe, and four spoons

"Will ye stop now!" said old woman Troak, and she threw these after the range. Stomp! stomp! came the shoes. "Take your pence!" said she, in a horrible fright, flinging the six great coppers after the lead, and then running as fast as her old legs and her bouncing bag would let her. Trip! trip! trip! chinkety chink! on came the shoes after her She heard children's voices, — she was in fact opposite the house where Yulee and Bo lived. She knew the place; there she had stolen the shoes. On she went; she panted up the long hill to her old house, the shoes after her, and there she got inside and locked the door.

But the shoes kept up a great hubbub outside. She peeped out. They were standing by the door, rising on their heels and then on their toes. In one were the six coppers, in the other, the range, the sinker, the spoons, and the lead-pipe. She had thrown them all, without knowing it, into the shoes. These would not leave, until at last she came out again, and picked them up, and walked down the hill, and put the shoes by the roadside where she had found them. No one was looking. She turned away, — when lo! after her they came again.

Just then Hopper came out by the gate. 'There be your shoes, sir," said the old woman, in a horror and started on a run. The shoes were still; Hopper picked them up, and saw Yulee's things in them.

"They 'll sink," said he, angrily; and he carried them to the ditch, and dropped the shoes in. The range, the sinker, the lead-pipe, the four spoons, all went to the bottom inside of the shoes. Bubbles came up to the surface. What were they? They were words of the Pair of Shoes that had never before spoken: —

"Let bygones be bygones. I 've had my revenge, and I 've got what I was after. Now let us be happy, and live in a ditch. I 'll tell you my history, which is something wonderful. I have known all about each of you for a long time, and I brought this to pass. But you shall hear."

So the range listened, and the spoons also, and the sinker and piece of lead and six copper cents were allowed to listen, while the Pair of Shoes told his history, which was indeed wonderful, and to close all, they had a grand wedding, and the newts looked on.

The Rich Man's Place.

THE RICH MAN'S PLACE.

THE rich man had a splendid place, — a house and barns, and a great pleasure-park, — but it was long since he had seen his place, for he had been travelling abroad. When people travel abroad, they expect to learn much, and the rich man when he came home had no doubt learned a great many things. He had brought away as much of other countries as he could carry, — a little in his head, but a good deal in boxes. When these were unpacked, there came forth pictures and statuary and malachite tables, and at least three cart-loads of curious things, which he arranged about the house, so that when his friends came to see him, they all said it was nearly as well as visiting foreign lands themselves; for when they entered the house, the rich man would remind them where he had been. "This hat-tree," he would say

as they took off their hats, "is made of wood from the Black Forest," and then they would shut their eyes, and fancy themselves there. "This table on which I keep my clothes-brush," he would continue, "is a malachite table from Russia." And then they would ask him if he saw the Czar. When they entered the parlor, he would take them on a tour about the room, and feed their imagination with a stone from the field of Waterloo, a splinter from John Knox's house, a piece of pottery from Herculaneum, and a scymitar from Greece; and, if left to themselves, they were given a book of views, or a stereoscope, or allowed to stand before the *étagère*, and handle the Swiss toys and Scotch pebbles. O it was precisely the same as going abroad, and so the guests all said.

But it was best when some one came who had also travelled, and perhaps with the rich man himself; then the guests would listen as one said to the other, "Do you remember that night on the Campagna?"

And the other would say, "Ah, indeed!" and look knowing. "But the Carnival, ah!" he would rejoin, and turn round to the guests, humming the "Carnival of Venice."

"What a tame country ours is!" the guests would sigh to themselves.

Now the rich man walked over his place when he had unpacked his curiosities. His father and grandfather had lived there before him, and the trees were old and large. It was certainly a noble plantation, but it did not please the rich man. It had had its own way too much, something was wanting, — he had been abroad, and seen parks, — what was it?

"This place needs attention," said he, "and I am determined to improve it." So he bought statues, and placed them about the grounds, — plaster statues of young men leaning on hoes, and young girls with aprons full of flowers, and in a basin he set up a statue of Venus rising out of the sea-foam. It was an extraordinary thing; a water-pipe ran round the base, and little jets threw out spirts of water which were to cover Venus, and look like a veil. But he did not succeed very well with this, and people found considerable fault with it. He built stone terraces, and ran straight gravel walks so wide that ten could walk abreast, and so long that one could prove the earth was round by watching a man appear at the other end. The cedar-trees he had cut after his own

taste, and of these he was very proud. The gardener, with a pair of shears, clipped the branches according to certain models. One tree looked like a bear, another like a lion, a third like a giraffe, and in the middle stood one which was precisely like a man.

"Now this is like something," said the rich man, admiring it; "still something is lacking. Ah! I know, it is a fountain." So he had a fountain made, and cut down the trees around it, that he might have a view of it from the house. It had almost as many jets as there were days in the year, one never could tell how it would look next.

"I believe I have everything after my mind now," said he, "and I will give a *fête* to all my neighbors. The poor people, too, shall be allowed to come in and stay at a distance. They will make the scene picturesque." He gave out word of the *fête*, and you may be sure everybody was delighted to come, for his grounds had been kept shut, and it was said that wonderful improvements had been made.

The day was spent in all manner of gayety. People walked over the place, and admired the cedar lion and bear and giraffe and colossal man, and, most of all, the fountain which changed its form

every five minutes. In the pond beneath swam beautiful swans, while gazelles fled timidly about, and storks stood, as usual, like soldiers who had come back from the war with one leg. It would be impossible to repeat what everybody said and thought.

The evening was even finer. There were fireworks, Chinese lanterns, and fire-balloons, the fountain playing all the time. The guests were well placed, a band of music played for them, and the poor people were in the distance. Every one was delighted. Rockets and Roman candles and pin-wheels and pigeons followed so rapidly, and were so brilliant, that people got tired of saying "Oh!" The last piece was the most magnificent. It was a battle-piece. Six frigates appeared, and fired fireworks at each other; the cannon boomed, the rockets went off in every direction, and at last the ships all burned up together, and after a great explosion, and red, green, and blue lights, everything went out, and it was as black as it could be. The fountain too stopped, and the day was over.

It was soon perfectly still, also; for as soon as the fireworks ceased, every one left the grounds. Yet a few remained; there was life there yet. Two hens,

who had each sat up to see the fireworks, came upon one another as they were going by different ways to the barn-yard. One was black, the other was yellow, and so we will distingush them, for otherwise they had no names.

"What! you here?" exclaimed Black, who naturally saw the other first. "This is rather late to be out."

"The same to you," rejoined Yellow. "For my part I rather enjoy this fine night, though it certainly is somewhat dark. I had no idea that night was quite so black."

"But it was bright enough just now," said the other. "That was a fine show!"

"Very!" said Yellow; "but, neighbor, let us not stand here. If you are on your way to the house, as I presume you are, let us go in company." So they walked on together, much to the relief of each.

"Yes, it was a superb show," resumed Yellow; "something unusual. I never saw anything so magnificent. John came into the house one night with two lanterns to look for eggs, and almost blinded us, but that was nothing to this."

"I suppose all the world was there," said Black.

"I did n't count, but made a rough guess. No one would miss such a sight. It probably only happens once."

"Yes," said Yellow, "it is precisely like our golden egg," — and she sighed, — "once, and only once. The rich man has done it, and the world may now stop."

"I suppose there could be nothing grander done," observed Black.

"You may be sure of that. It was no common thing. We go on laying eggs every day, but they are nothing but shell eggs. The rich man has been round the globe, and when he comes home you don't think he would settle down like people, and just mind his business! That would be laying shell eggs only. No, he lays the golden egg, depend upon it." The yellow hen, who prided herself on her wisdom, would have gone on much longer upon the subject of eggs, but at this moment there was a rustling in the bushes.

"The fire-sticks are all down, I hope," whispered Black. "I dodged about when they fell before"; but as she spoke, the Stork stepped in a dignified manner on to the gravel-walk, and approached them.

"Good evening," said Yellow, in a faint voice, and Black tried to say the same; the Stork took no notice

of them; but Yellow, seeing more distinctly who it was, and being anxious to talk, stopped her walk, and continued, "I was just saying to my friend how fine it all was to-night. We are fortunate in living at such times. Nothing like it ever known before. The golden egg, no doubt, for I have a theory, friend, that hens are not the only ones that are trying to lay golden eggs." The yellow hen always came round to this point, and would have now come round to it again, but the Stork interrupted her.

"When you have seen as much of the world as I have, you will change your mind. Eggs!" and the Stork drew himself up on one leg; "eggs! there is something better to be done. The rich man is a fool. Let him stand on one leg and think, instead of burning his fingers with matches. To find out what we are made of and what is to come of it, — that is the only thing," and he walked away.

"Just hear him!" said Black. "Suppose we see what we are made of. But I can't understand. Can you?"

"Yes, but it 's not easy to explain," said Yellow, and they talked no more. Yet they listened, for they were passing through the cedar-trees, and conversation was there going on.

"Say what you will," said the colossal man, "it is very fine to look like a man."

It was to an elm that he spoke, and the elm replied, "Methinks you have lost your good sense, friend, since the gardener trimmed you. You were very contented then, and had no foolish thoughts."

"Foolish thoughts! I think of the fireworks, and the fountain, and the music, as the rich man does. Don't speak of those old days when I was in low society."

"Is this anything like a roar?" said the cedar lion, rubbing his branches. "I think I make a pretty good lion."

"In time! in time!" said the cedar bear. "I believe my business is to growl, — what do you say to this?" and he growled, as he thought.

"It is extraordinary how tall I am," said the cedar giraffe. "This is living to some purpose. I really never knew before what I could be."

"Just hear them all!" said the elm to a neighbor. "I thought they would have been too ashamed to speak, and yet they now despise us. We are only trees, they tell us. Well, I am content. It is good enough for me. Here I have grown, and what I shall

come to I can't say but something fine, no doubt. So, neighbor, I think he best we can do is to grow."

"How will that do?" asked the black hen.

"I think we had best keep on laying eggs," said Yellow. "Perhaps the golden one will turn up after all; who knows?" and they walked on to the barn, where they had to stay outside till morning.

The trees now were also silent, for steps were heard. Two friends, an artist and a poet, out of the crowd of guests, were walking past, enjoying the quiet. They walked to another part of the grounds, away from the still fountain and the tortured trees and the blackened fireworks.

"Here are trees one might paint," said the artist, looking round with admiration upon some oaks. "Those cedars! good for firewood. But an oak looks well in a picture. By the way, that would have been a fine night-scene to paint, — the fireworks lighting up the crowd of poor people on the grass, — a pretty scene; it had good points."

"The heavens make the most splendid display of fire," said the poet, looking up. "Let us walk here all night, and watch the changes of the sky and see how we are affected, — what thoughts we have, and

then I can put it down in verse." Then they talked of nature and art, and unity, and the poetic soul, but no one wants to listen to such talk. Indeed, they tired of it soon, and passed out of the gate, somewhat sleepy. It was the gate out of which the poor people went: but all had not gone.

Under the trees still walked two of these. They also had seen the fireworks, and they had seen the trees and the stars. But they had better things to talk of.

"I would not exchange all this for you," said he.

"Well," said she, "if it were yours I do not think I should love you more."

Unlucky Fritz.

UNLUCKY FRITZ.

FRITZ was a soldier-boy, but he had never been to war; though it was no fault of his, for there had been no war. But now there was one in good truth, and Fritz must join his company. He put on his uniform and buckled his knapsack. His sweetheart stuck a sprig of evergreen in his cap.

"There is only one thing wanting," said she, "and that is a red beard. If you had a red beard, Fritz, you would be splendid. Now good by."

Fritz stepped briskly down the road, and his sweetheart threw her shoe after him for luck, and then waved her handkerchief at him, but he would not look back, though she called to him, for that would have been unlucky. He had two miles to go before he should come to his regiment, which was to start in half an hour. The birds chirped in the branches of

the wood through which he had to pass, and Fritz whistled nearly as well as they. He looked at the sprig of evergreen in his cap, and thought of Gret, his sweetheart; then he looked up, and saw a stranger walking slowly along a little in advance of him, knocking off with a stick the heads of the flowers on the roadside. The man turned, and Fritz thought to himself, "O if I but had that man's red beard; that would please Gret!" for the man had a long beard, fiery red.

"Yes," nodded the man, now beside him. "And you may have it if you will pay for it."

"How do you know I want it?" asked Fritz, for he had not spoken his wish aloud.

"Only the sprig of evergreen in your cap," said the man, "and you shall have my red beard. No one will know but that it grew on you, and she will be pleased."

"She gave me the sprig," said Fritz, "and you shall not have it"; and he walked on, whistling, and the man with the red beard knocked off the heads of two more flowers.

"Nevertheless," thought Fritz, "I should like a red beard."

When he reached the place where he was to join his company, it was before the hour appointed, but the soldiers, drummers, captain and all, had gone. It was two full hours since they left, the people said, and they showed Fritz which road had been taken. So Fritz set out on it to catch up with his company.

The road, like the one he had just trodden, led through a wood.

"It certainly is a very warm morning," said Fritz, after he had been walking fast for some time; "I could almost suppose there were a fire somewhere, — nf! nf!" and he sniffed the air. "There is a fire!" he exclaimed. "I smell it now distinctly." The wind was blowing in his face, and the cinders from the fire began to fall around him. Without doubt the fire was in front, and he should have to meet it. Fritz stopped to consider what was to be done. The fire was both before and behind him; nor could he avoid it by striking out into the woods at the side. Already he could hear the crackling of the flames, and see the column of smoke and fire. A great oak was above him, and long red moss hung down from one of the branches. "That will burn finely!" thought Fritz. But now he must look out for himself. There

comes the roaring fire, and the road runs straight through it.

"Well," said Fritz, and he buttoned his coat tightly about him, and pulled his cap down over his face.

"Now!" said Fritz, and he ran down the road, face toward the flame. In the open road of course the fire was not so hot, and Fritz could breathe. He ran with his eyes shut until he was quite ready to drop; but the heat was less, though the ground was fearfully hot, and when he opened his eyes he was through the fire and among the charred woods.

"That was a run," said Fritz, taking a long breath, and looking back. He felt of his eyebrows, but they were gone. "If I had had a red beard," said he, "there would have been none left." He took off his hat, but the evergreen sprig looked as fresh as when Gret stuck it in. Then he walked on.

"O for some water!" he thought to himself, and he had scarcely said the word, before he heard the sound of it in the distance. "It must be the Flush," thought he, "and if it is, it is uncommonly high to make such a noise." It was the Flush; but when he came to it, he hardly knew the stream. The bridge was gone, and the torrent of water, usually but a

quiet brook, was carrying along trees and logs at a fearful rate. "Here 's more water than I need," said Fritz. "The thing is, what to do with the waste quantity." It was impossible to get round the stream, and it crossed the road. Fritz looked at it awhile, then put his trousers inside of his boots, and plunged boldly in. He struggled across; but it is no easy matter to swim with one's boots on.

"Well," said Fritz, sitting down on the opposite bank to squeeze himself a little, and wring out the water. "'T would have been better to have had the water first, and the fire afterward." He shook off the wet, took his trousers out of his boots, and marched on. "Let me see," quoth he, "I must have come three miles; in another half-mile I shall reach the Gap," for that was the name of a place in the road where two hills nearly met, and were held back by tall rocks, leaving only the width of the road between.

"Halloa!" he said, as he came in sight of the Gap, "is there a tree across the road? If it were not so remarkable, I should say it was a man"; and it was When he came up to it there was no further doubt A man was standing with his back against one rock, stroking his long beard, — a red beard.

"Where are your eyebrows?" said he, as Fritz came up.

"I left them in the fire," said Fritz. 'Did you set the woods on fire with that red beard of yours?"

"Yes," said the man; "was it hot?"

"O no!" said Fritz, "I kept myself cool by running."

"You look damp," went on the red-bearded man. "Why did n't you dry your clothes before you put them on?"

"I 'm going to be ironed out first," said Fritz. "Good morning"; and he assayed to go through the Gap. But the red-bearded man suddenly, and in the most unaccountable manner, extended his legs, still leaning against the rock, until his feet touched the opposite side. Fritz stepped back, ran and took a leap to go over the long legs; but the man with a red beard raised his knees, and Fritz only fell. Then he offered to go under, but the man with a red beard slid down till it was quite impossible. Fritz stood and considered the matter, and the man stroked his beard. Fritz looked at the man, and the man looked at Fritz, and then Fritz set about demolishing him. He took out his sword and hacked at him. He cut off one leg

and then the other, and by this means he got through, but it was exceedingly hard work. The man stroked his beard, and when Fritz had got through, he put on his legs again, and said, "Once, twice, thrice. Twice, thrice."

And Fritz laughed and said, "Four times if you like. Good by"; — but the man with a red beard did not say "good by."

It is exceedingly wearisome walking in the hot sun, especially after one has gone through fire and water and cut off a pair of extension legs, and Fritz began to feel somewhat exhausted. But he walked quicker, for that rests one, and looked at the evergreen sprig which was still fresh, and then thought of Gret.

Now he came to a fork in the road, and he was puzzled to know which was the right road, for there were marks of men's feet in either direction. One would have said that a company had gone down both roads, but this Fritz knew could not be; whichever way he looked, he thought for the time that that road must be the right one. Then he examined the footprints in the soft ground more carefully. It was true that on each road there were equally long steps as of men

marching, side by side, and all going in one direction; but what surprised him was, that on one road there were a number of shorter steps, and these were as far as possible in the regular footprints; moreover, all the prints were exactly of the same size. He walked a little way upon the road, and found that his step was just the length of the regular steps; then, instead of turning about, he walked backwards, and found that now his feet took exactly the prints that were nearer together and more irregular.

"Somebody must have been fond of walking backwards," said Fritz; "but he stopped at the fork, for the foot turns round there." As he held his cap in his hand and fanned himself, the sprig of evergreen dropped to the ground. When he picked it up he found something clinging to it, — six red hairs.

"I think my friend of the red beard must have walked backward," said Fritz, and he turned down the other road. As he walked he whistled, and that seemed to waken all the birds of the forest. A crow flew screeching over him. Fritz stopped to shake his head. The tops of the trees were waving in the wind, and they bent down over him in a threatening way, the bushes at the sides of the road leaned across to

each other, as if they whispered and gestured; in the sky the clouds were driving before the wind, and growing black with a gathering storm. A catbird in a tall dead pine uttered its solemn note. A great rock overhung the road, and looked as if it would fall on him as he passed by. Crash! went a dead tree upon the right. Fritz began to recollect all the stories he had heard about what had befallen men in forests; how the winds and trees and rocks had conspired against them, and done them to death. He conjured up spectres on all sides; the bushes seemed witches to him, the crows black demons; and as the light of the sun struck through the trees, he seemed to see bright goblins dancing around him. Still he marched on, choking the thoughts that arose, when, as he made a bend, he saw before him a gigantic man with a red beard, which he stroked as he nodded. Fritz shut his eyes, and said the Lord's prayer, and when he opened them again he saw only a stiff tree swaying in the wind, and its leaf-covered branches rising and falling. The sky above was still overcast, but the wind was driving the clouds headlong away from him. The birds sang cheerily, but the catbird and the crow were not there.

Fritz was now tired indeed, and he sat down to rest upon a rock by the side of the road. He was in the deepest part of the forest, and the trees formed an almost impenetrable thicket, threaded only by the road. What a walk he had had, and he was not yet at its end. There was no telling what difficulties he would yet have to encounter, and meanwhile how far his company must have got by this time! Really it seemed to Fritz as if it were almost fated that he should not reach them. He certainly had done his best, and no fault could be found with him. He was at the rendezvous at the time appointed, and he might fairly have turned back then, but he kept on, — and now only to think what he had passed through! In his mind's eye he could see the road. At one end was the cottage, and Gret by the door; at the other — but he could not see the other end; he could only see the dark forest into which the road twisted, with his company at some unknown point on it far beyond. There was no doubt which end was the pleasanter.

"Whew!" said Fritz, "how tired I am!" and he clasped his hands behind his head, while his cap fell over his eyes. His eyes closed unconsciously, and he fell into a drowse. Then he nodded, and that awoke him. He dozed again, and again woke up.

"This is too bad!" he exclaimed; "what is the use of my going on?" His doubts again came thickly upon him. It really seemed the most unnatural thing in the world that he should go on. Still thinking about it, and fast getting more and more inclined to give up and go back, he once more fell into a nap, and when he started awake this time, his cap, which had slid down till it was now resting on his nose, fell to the ground. He picked it up, with the resolve to turn homeward, when he saw the sprig of evergreen on it.

"Gret stuck that there!" he exclaimed. "Go back, indeed! She told me to come back when the war was over, and she'd marry me, if I had to put the ring on her finger with my toes," and away went Fritz down the road. Suddenly a man swiftly crossed his path and disappeared in the wood. His face Fritz only saw for a moment; it was bearded, and the beard was red.

"Once, twice, thrice," said the man.

"The third time never fails," shouted Fritz after him.

The forest soon became less dense, and it was not long before he saw the open country beyond. But

his company was not visible, though they had left marks of their passage.

Fritz pushed forward eagerly, and resolved to be turned aside or stopped by no difficulties or doubts. The day was nearing its close, and he could ill spare the hours that were left. Upon each side fields stretched in rolling lines, and the grain bent before the wind shining in the sun, or suddenly shaded, as some cloud passed above the field. It was a lovely scene, and for its very beauty Fritz would gladly have stopped, but the temptation had little power when he was so eager. In vain the brooks purled and the flowers smiled; in vain the shady nooks invited escape from the dusty road. It was all very charming, no doubt, and to Fritz's tired body it seemed as if nothing could be more delicious than to step aside into the cool shade, or plunge into the blue water; but he satisfied himself with a look, and still passed on. Such shows as this should not arrest him.

He was gladdened by the sight of a well-sweep near a farm-house not far from the road, for the walking and the dusty way had made him exceedingly thirsty. He turned aside to it, and lowered the bucket into the well. From the door of the farm-house came a girl,

with a glass for him. Fritz looked up, and almost let the sweep go; it was the most remarkable resemblance; he could hardly have told the girl before him from his own sweetheart, Gret. When she spoke, too, the voice was the same. Was it not charming? He took the glass from her, and stood by the cool well. Her eyes were even more beautiful than Gret's, he was nearly ready to declare. Such a gray for color! and her voice was even softer; and when she talked, he quite forgot to make any comparison between her and Gret, she was so very much more fascinating. He sipped his water a long while, talking between the sips; he offered her some, and she was as long drinking as he; for was not Fritz a gay soldier lad? When she gave him back the glass, as if it was his, her hand was so small that he nearly took it all with the glass. "It was a very soft hand," he thought to himself, and felt of it curiously, looking up into her eyes. From her eyes he looked to her mouth. How very small, and what red lips!

But Fritz's eyes, thus roving, caught sight of something beyond her face at a little distance. It was nothing, — only a red beard; he did not even see a face to it; he did not give himself time for that, for

he suddenly left the glass, turned about, felt of his cap to see if his evergreen sprig were safe, and marched off, singing, but not very loud,

> "My true love lives where the pine-trees stir, far away,
> She thinks of me and I of her, — all the day."

Now the sun was to go down in the west, and still Fritz must push on; toward the golden clouds he moved, and hurried as if he expected to be present when the sun went over the edge. The fields grew broader, and their lines became more indistinct. He came to a long hill, and from the top thought he would see his company. There was a little copse just before he reached the top, and he was passing it, when he heard distinctly cries and moans within. A tender-hearted lad was Fritz, but what should he do here? The sun had already gone down. Only a moment though did he hesitate. Then he parted the bushes and made his way into the thicket. It was so dark within that he could see nothing distinctly, but he could make out the body of a man stretched upon the ground, and it was from this that the moan came. Fritz stooped down to examine it, and, as he stooped, the man's voice feebly said "Water." There needed no urging for Fritz, and he

started out of the thicket in all haste, anxious to relieve the sufferer. But where should he go? He had passed no other well since the one where he waited so long, — almost too long, — and that was a half-mile back at the least. But back ran Fritz. There again was the girl who was so extraordinarily like Gret; but Fritz remembered the evergreen slip, and only stopped to tell her that there was a dying man in the thicket, and he had come for water for him. He begged her to hasten to the man, or to call some one about there. The girl lightly laughed, and Fritz was shocked.

"After all," he remarked to himself, "I don't think she looks very much like Gret."

Quite exhausted by his exertion, Fritz reached the copse with his water. He entered it, and there lay the man still, more indistinct than before, for it was darker. He moaned feebly as Fritz leaned tenderly over him, and offered him the water.

"Take me to the nearest house," he gasped, and Fritz lifted him up in his strong arms and stumbled out into the road. He undertook to alter his position a little, and, as he did so, his cap touched the man's chin. "Good heavens!" said Fritz, staggering back

ward, and letting the man drop; and no wonder, for his evergreen sprig had touched the man's beard, and in the darkness it bristled like red flame.

The man confronted Fritz a moment, stroking his flaming red beard. "Once, twice, thrice," said he, "and then the throw."

"And I win," said Fritz, walking off, whistling. A few steps and he was at the top of the hill. There was a sight to behold. At the foot were the camp-fires of the soldiers. The whole regiment must be there and more. That he soon found out, for in a short time he was among his company, and telling his adventures. They all agreed it was very astonishing, but Fritz soon went to sleep, and slept soundly, as he had a right to do.

The next day was a stirring one. There would be a fight every one said, and every one hoped to be in it; Fritz the most of any. The sprig of evergreen was still in his cap as fast as when Gret herself had stuck it there. He looked at it and thought of Gret, and then he saw that his musket was in order. The word came to prepare. Fritz was the first to be ready. He was placed in the front line, and then, — Forward march!

They could see the enemy advancing, but they were to wait till they saw the whites of the enemy's eyes before firing. Fritz was at the end of the line, and he determined to shoot the man opposite to him. He kept his eye on him, intending to lose not a second after seeing the white of his eye; but before he saw that, he saw that the man had a red beard.

"The throw!" exclaimed Fritz to himself, and in an instant fired at the man whose piece was levelled at him. It was not a moment too soon, for just as he had fired, his right arm was shot off. The rest of the line, thinking Fritz was farther-sighted than they, and had already seen the whites of the enemy's eyes, also fired, and the fight now commenced.

It was not a long one, though it was fierce. Fritz was in the hospital on account of the loss of his arm. The surgeons were talking together, and he could hear what they said.

"How many of the enemy were killed?" asked one.

"Many wounded, but only one killed," replied the other surgeon. "He was a man with a long red beard; the ball passed through it, and through his neck. It was a most extraordinary sight."

And when the war was over, Fritz went home. He had only one arm, and that was his left, but Gret said it made no difference, she would marry him, and he might put the ring on her finger with his left hand. So it was, and when they were married, Fritz insisted on wearing the very sprig of evergreen which Gret had stuck in his cap when he went to the war. It was green still.

THE

MARRIAGE OF THE PINE.

THE MARRIAGE OF THE PINE

To S. F. A.

IN RECOLLECTION OF SATURDAY NIGHTS, BY A THREE-CORNERED FIRESIDE.

I.

THE WOOING.

AS one comes over the sea, it is impossible to help noticing the Pine that stands alone upon the top of the hill, serving as a beacon to the sailor. In the early morning it may often be seen through openings in the mist; at noonday it is there still, — the sun cannot burn it and the wind scarcely bends it; and at sunset it shatters the crimson bars of the sky, keeping its sombre distinctness as the sun loses its brightness, until in the twilight it is the only object that can be made out on the mountain; it is then that the Pine looks most solitary and most sufficient to itself. It wears upon its head a

coronal and calls itself a king. The trees that are below it upon the side of the mountain yield homage to it; the bushes that make the top of the mountain almost impenetrable are the Pine's body-guard, and so closely do they hedge the king that the little flowers living modestly under the roots of the trees have not yet been able to bring the humble tribute which they have long wished to offer. Only the Trailing Arbutus, after years of patient creeping, at last succeeded in reaching the foot of the Pine; the bushes keep at a proper distance from the king, and the Trailing Arbutus thus found itself alone in the royal presence; but the Pine never noticed the gift which had been brought with such toil. Indeed, though the delicate May perfume was borne upward to its branches, it could hardly have discovered the timid flower, so completely was it hidden under the leaves, — but it did not look for it. The Trailing Arbutus, however, felt no misgivings. She had brought her gift, and laid it at the king's feet, nor had dared to expect any notice; but a scale from one of the cones dropped near her, and she, in simplicity, taking it to be a notice from the Pine, covered herself in confusion, and for several days dared not peep out.

This was in the early spring, when from the sea the mountain seemed clad in Tyrian purple, and the Pine stood a king that had cast his robes at his feet, indifferent to his attire. To him it was enough that he was a king by birth, and he held converse only with the stars above him. But the Pine has his battles, for there are fierce warriors that do not respect his royalty. Sometimes in the depth of night when he is looking up to the stars, and fancying he can touch them with his crown as he talks with them, he sees one after another shut out from sight, and he knows that forces are gathering above and around, that have long sought to dethrone him. Then he leaves the stars and prepares for the conflict. Below him he can see the trees that call him king, and the bushes that have formed themselves into a body-guard, for their own honor rather than for his protection. These he knows will bow before the rush of the enemy's forces, but he will not bow. He thinks of his royalty, and he tells himself that it is eternal. The forces are marshalled for the attack, and he awaits them in proud security. From above, the heavy clouds descend in great masses; if they open, it is only for the flash of the fire and the boom of the report. The chariots of the winds sweep

through the air and hurl themselves against his branches. But the clouds and the winds pass away, and still the Pine stands, shaking off the signs of the battle, and with a fresher strength, receiving the visit of the morning sun. Not the snows of winter, nor summer rains, avail to conquer him, and every victory leaves the Pine more secure in his sense of impregnable might.

Once — it was a forenoon in the month of May — the Pine was visited by a little bird, a Robin. Although the Pine is king, and the birds know it, yet they, simple creatures, make no difference between those that are kings and those that are not. They tell the same stories and sing the same songs to each, and never know when they have done or said anything which might seem to some disrespectful and unbecoming. The Robin, therefore, took a seat upon one of the branches of the Pine without the least ceremony, and began in a brisk voice to tell about a wedding he had just attended. It was that of the Pond-Lily and the Water-Rat, and there had been the liveliest time imaginable. Thirty-three Mice — for the Grasshopper had counted them, and he had eaten the Grasshopper, and so ought to know — thirty-three Mice had been

in the bridegroom's party, and had all sat beside their tails in a row on the shore, while the bridegroom swam out to the Pond-Lily. A dozen Turtles stood drawn up in line near the bank, ready to carry any of the relations who chose to ride, and an orchestra of Frogs, led by a powerful one in a green coat, and gathered upon a platform-rock near by, had given altogether too much music; at least so the Robin thought, but the Rat he supposed thought differently. He had himself paid his respects to the Pond-Lily and then left, for of all things he enjoyed telling about weddings; and when he was through, the Robin cleared his throat and sang, as he always does in May, his refrain: —

"Two are better than one,
Two are better than one."

Then he flew away to tell the story elsewhere.

The Trailing Arbutus had not lost a word, and was overjoyed at the good fortune of the Pond-Lily.

"I have seen her," she said to herself, "and I have heard the orchestra of Frogs, though I have never seen the Water-Rat, or his friends the Mice, but he must be of fine family to marry such a great lady. O, if only our king, the Pine, would marry! I would give up all my blossoms for the wedding. But who

is fine enough to be his queen?" and the Arbutus sighed.

As she sighed, her breath rose to the branches of the Pine, and even reached the coronal upon his head. Perhaps it was the savor of her thought that reached the Pine, for he also at that moment thought of marriage. He had heard what the Robin had good-naturedly chattered, though he did not pay any attention to it. What should he care for the story, or the song of the little bird? But when the Robin flew away, and when the fragrance of the Arbutus rose, he thought of himself so kingly, and he said: —

"I am a king and I will share my royalty with no one. What need have I of a queen? Who is there that I should ask to be a queen to me? To ask would be to say that such a one is greater than I. Yet to have a queen is to assert one's royalty. If a star then should dare to come and be my queen I would not spurn her. She should lie at my feet, and when I willed she might even rise to my branches."

The Trailing Arbutus heard this also, and she trembled. "Yes," she said to herself, "a star only would befit the Pine; but to lie at his feet, — I dare to do that. Can it be that I am too bold?"

The Pine, when he had spoken, looked up to the sky. He knew that the stars could hear him, though they could not be seen. "At night," said he, "when the sun which they so fear has gone down into the sea, they will come out one by one, and the boldest will fall from the sky and lie at my feet."

The night came and it was cloudless. One by one the stars peeped forth, and the Pine watched them as they looked down timorously.

"No one dares to come," he said within himself; "they fear me too much. But they have nothing to fear, for I am a king, and would be gracious as only a king is gracious."

For a long time no star fell, though the Pine looked upward. But in the depth of the night one did at last fall. It fell down the western slope of the heavens. The Pine could see it glide swiftly downward, and at last it sank into the waves of the sea.

"That was lost," said the Pine; but though he waited till the gray dawn, when the stars faded from sight, none fell at his feet. "Henceforth," said he, proudly, "the stars shall not have my thoughts." Now was the Pine more solitary than before; he held himself apart from all things about him, and medi-

tated only on his own kingship, and its eternity. Thus days and nights passed, nor was there any movement of wind or gathering of clouds; and the Pine at last wished for a change, that morning and night should not succeed each other perpetually, and make no break in his existence; he longed for another battle with the elements, and when it came, it passed and left him young again, and with new vigor in his branches. The storm over, the Pine did not at once return to his old solitariness, but his senses were open to the movements about him. He heard the flowing yet steady rolling of the waves against the foot of the hill on which he stood, and looking off he saw the sea stretching even beyond his sight, and rising and falling in myriad lights and forms. Her great bosom heaved, as if she sent forth sighs, and the white foam sparkled as it was flung across the waters.

"That would be a queen worth having," said he, "for she would be fitful and yet obedient; endlessly various and always the same; she understands not herself, and would yield to whoever was stronger than she. His gloom would be hers, and she would have no joy except when reflecting his."

And when he remembered that the storm, which

could not conquer him, had tossed the waves about mercilessly, he said, again: "Yes, she would be my proud queen, but I would rule her. She would have her will, but mine would be supreme." And the Pine resolved to make the sea his queen.

Then came the Crow, flying from the sea, and wheeled about the top of the Pine.

"Ha! ha!" laughed the Crow. "Do you think to have the sea? Watch to-night, and then tell me. Mark my words. Ha! ha!"

The branches of the Pine were darker, and the coronal upon his head never moved. The Trailing Arbutus at his foot heard the Crow, and she shuddered as she felt the darkness about her.

"Ah!" she moaned to herself, "is the Pine to have no queen? If the sea only knew, — but no! that may not be. The Crow knows, but he will not say it, that she is betrothed, and when that takes place all is over."

The Pine, in his heavy branches, received all that the Arbutus said. He did not know who it was that said it, but he scorned the pity. "I care nothing for the sea," he said, aloud. "Let her marry whom she will."

But at night the Pine once more looked out on the sea. The moon was up, and he could see it sporting with the waves. They smiled when it touched them, and leaped up, shaking their glittering locks. He could see the waters rise higher and higher, as if they longed to reach the moon, and he said within himself: "Yes, the moon is the lover, and they are betrothed; it is all over; but I would the sea were mine. I wish I might blind the moon!"

"Ha! ha! Mark my words! mark my words!" screamed the Crow, flying overhead.

The Trailing Arbutus had lifted herself up as high as possible to watch the sea, and her little eyes fairly trembled with delight.

"What a foolish crow!" said she, laughingly. The moon is the mother of the sea. Is it not beautiful? How they love one another!"

The Pine heard this also, and it sounded so sweetly to him, that he wondered whence it came.

"The sea shall know my passion," said he; "and she shall be my queen. What gift shall I send her?"

The Arbutus scarcely whispered to herself, "O that I were of greater worth, that the Pine might send my

flowers," and the wish went up on a cloud of fragrance. The Pine recognized the sweet scent and the wish, and knew that it was the same voice that he had just heard. He looked down for the little one. The timid flower shrank from the gaze of her king, and he could not at first discover her. When he did spy her, shrinking beneath the leaves, he said: "You shall go, with your sweet perfume, to the sea as my offering."

The Trailing Arbutus could not speak, but she moved her flowers, and that was to say that she would go.

"Tell her," said the Pine, "that I would have her for my queen."

It was the early morning when the Arbutus besought the wind to carry her flowers. She crept forth from her shelter, and laid her flowers upon the dry forest-leaves about her. "Farewell!" said she, and crept back, bereft, to her hiding-place. The wind hurried by, and, seizing the leaves in which the flowers were curled, flew through the dizzy height, and out on to the sea. Then he swept downward, and struck the waves, throwing the leaves with the flowers upon the waters.

"Take us," said the flowers, breathing out their

sweet perfume in death, "we are the gift of the Pine. He would have you for his queen."

The sea laughed. "The Pine's queen!" and she tossed her waves about in glee. "I will have no king! I will always be free!" But she looked up toward the Pine as she said it, and saw the sun gilding his coronal. "He is royal," she mused, "and must have an answer to his gift." She called the Sea-Gull, and, as the bird swooped down toward her, she whispered to him, binding some sea-grass about his neck "Fly to the Pine and carry this sea-grass from me. He is gracious, but I love my freedom, and will not be his queen."

Away flew the Sea-Gull, and the sea laughed and mocked with her light waves the rustling of the Pine. The Sea-Gull bore his message, and left the sea-grass upon the branches of the Pine.

The Trailing Arbutus heard the words, and beneath the leaves she sighed to herself: "Alas me! I have no flowers or fragrance wherewith to comfort the Pine, if my poor gifts could comfort him. I have but one little bud, and that has not opened. Is he to have no queen? How cruel the sea is! But she cannot know what a great king he is, or perhaps she fears him."

For days and nights the Pine looked out on to the sea, but he held his own counsel. At first he had said to himself, "Let the proud sea go!" But as he looked longer, and as he thought of his royalty, he said, "I will compel her to marry me."

While he was questioning whether he should do this by force or by shrewd plan, he listened by day and by night to the voice of the sea as she sang to herself; and by day and by night he watched her bright sport, and her tender mood toward her great mother. One by one he forgot his wily plans, his harsh purposes. He almost forgot his royalty even, as he watched intently the beautiful sea, and he said to himself: "O would she were mine! I would love her, and there is no gift I would deny her." He leaned forward as he said this, and bent toward the sea. "Yes, I will win her," said he, eagerly. "She shall know that I love her, and she will give me her love."

Then, with strong will, moved by his burning love, the Pine resolved to win the sea. He struck his roots deep into the earth, and through the tingling fibres he charged the mountain to cover the sea. The mountain threw its heavy shadow afar out on to the waters, and as it grew, stealing over the surface,

the sea felt its presence, and trembled within herself. She fled to escape it, and on the outermost border she felt the form of the Pine above her.

"It is the Pine," she whispered to herself; "he has caused the shadow. O suffer me to escape!" she implored. The vapors, rising as her breath, bore the prayer to the Pine, and he moved his crowned head, so that the shadow rippled on the water, and the sea feared it, yet was irresistibly drawn to stay by it.

But when the night came, and the sea could not feel the presence of the shadow, she forgot the Pine, and sparkled with myriad smiles. The fascination of her beauty was a spell upon the Pine, and he breathed forth from his branches a long-kept breath laden with his rich nature. The breath moved seaward, and rested upon the waves. The sea knew whence it came, and if she would, she could not bid it leave, — but she did not wish it to leave, it was so enchanting a presence. She looked up to the hill and saw the dark form of the Pine, and from her bosom a sigh escaped, almost unwittingly, that told of a longing for something that she dared not utter Then in the morning the Pine could see her waves rolling up to the shore as if they would reach him

but he said to himself, in the glare of the sun: "Last night was a dream; it was only the image of my own wishes that I saw."

Once more the kingly tree bent down to the vine at his feet.

"Sweet vine," said he, "send one more flower to the sea, and tell her that I love her."

The Trailing Arbutus opened its last and only bud, and, first sending up the fragrance to the coronal of the Pine, laid the little flower upon a leaf, and prayed the wind to come. This, too, was borne over the hill, and through the air, and dropped upon the bosom of the sea. It told the story of the Pine's love, and the sea listened with hushed trembling. The fragrance mingled with her vapor, and together they rose even to the starry summit of the Pine. The story of love that was in the fragrance was turned by the vapor into the love of the sea for the Pine. No words were spoken, but its penetration of the coronal was more perfect than speech, and the Pine knew that he had won the sea. Nor was the little flower lost, for the sea inurned it in her choicest shell, and bade the sea-grass weave a robe to enwrap it.

II.

THE BETROTHAL.

THE betrothal of the Pine and the sea was immediately celebrated, but it was very unceremonious; ceremony was reserved for the wedding. Only the birds were with the Pine. The Robin was the first to hear of it, and he, you might say, was everywhere. There was not a bird within several miles that did not hear of it from him almost instantly. There was a great gathering, and they all wished the Pine joy in the most lively, good-natured way imaginable, — and the Pine was a king too. The other trees could hardly believe that he would take it so pleasantly, and the bushes that formed a body-guard were shocked beyond measure at the impropriety. Then the Swallow, bustling about, managed to get the birds all quiet, though she herself chattered incessantly. There was stillness for a moment when the Robin came forward and sang a song, and he insisted on closing every verse with

"Two are better than one,
Two are better than one."

"And so it is," chimed in the Swallow, nodding all around.

One little bird, quite unnoticed by the others, was at the foot of the Pine. It was a ground-bird, and its cheek was nestling upon the Trailing Arbutus. The Arbutus had no fragrance to give the Pine, and she said to herself: "If I but had a flower for him; but he is so happy, and that is well."

The little ground-bird added, "And it is you who have made him happy"; and the two told over the whole story of the wooing. "If it had not been for you," said the little bird, quite positively, "take my word for it, the Pine never would have won the sea."

"Hush! what a word!" said the Arbutus. "The Pine is king, and I am the least of the flowers."

Meanwhile, there had been rejoicing over the sea, but in somewhat different fashion. It was in the depths that the rejoicing was made. Above, the waves were glistening and dancing in light, and one would have thought it was but holiday joy; but farther down, where the water stirred less, there were songs sung, and garlands woven, that one may only hint at. The little flower of the Arbutus, that had been treasured

in the sea's choicest shell, was opened to sight, and about this were songs sung, and around this garlands were woven.

III.

THE NUPTIALS.

NO more time was suffered between the betrothal and the nuptials than was required for the preparation; and though that was abundant, it was so simple and so readily made, that very soon it was announced by the Robin, on the part of the Pine, and by the Sea-Gull, on the part of the sea, — for they were masters of ceremony, — that everything was ready, and that every one, without exception, was bidden to the wedding. When the bushes heard this, they were so vexed at the commonness, that they declared they would have nothing whatever to do with the affair; and if it were not unbecoming, they would give up their place as body-guard to the king.

"It will never do," said the Robin to the Sea-Gull, "to have these bushes here. You and I, and our relations, need not mind them, but they interfere very much with the progress and view of others. We

must get rid of them, — and then they are so horribly stiff."

"Take your own measures," said the Sea-Gull, "I know nothing about such matters. My friend, the Sword-fish, would be happy to be of service, no doubt; but you know that is impossible." So the Robin held a council of the birds, and they hit upon a device. There was a party of goats, that fed on another part of the hill, and all the birds went to them in a body.

"We know where there's something good!" they began crying out, and they persisted in it so long, that at last the goats believed them. The biggest goat, with the longest beard, was the last to be convinced, but once yielding, he was the most decided of all.

"Follow me!" he said, wagging his beard, and they all followed him, and he followed the birds. These led him to the top of the mountain, and when the goats found it covered with bushes, they never stopped till they had demolished every bush on the place.

There was now no difficulty, and the wedding was celebrated. It was in the night-time, and the moon was shining. The ceremony of marriage was a simple one

From the coronal of the Pine a ring was woven, and with this he was to wed the sea. Before it was borne away, however, the Pine spoke.

"I am king," said he, "and the king can receive no gifts. But the king may ask gifts. Sweet vine!" and he bent to the Trailing Arbutus, "wilt thou form part of the ring with which I wed the sea?"

All listened for the answer, but none came. Even the little ground-bird, that sat beside the Arbutus, could hear nothing. The Robin came, and repeated the request for the Pine. The Arbutus said, so faintly that hardly the Robin heard, "My king asks it!"

And the Robin understood her. "You shall carry her," said he, to the little ground-bird, "you and your friends."

So the little ground-birds were the attendants of the Trailing Arbutus, and very proud they were of their office, and tender. They plucked up the roots from the ground, and the Arbutus felt the sharp pain running through every fibre; but it was sadder yet to be separated from the earth she loved so well. Her roots clung to it still and detached what they might, but it could only be little, and she felt her life slowly ebbing. The little ground-birds flew up with her

and dexterously interwove the vine with the Pine's ring. The Arbutus knew what it was, and she hardly dared breathe for the exquisiteness of her feeling.

Then the Robin and the Sea-Gull bore the ring, and all the birds of the forest flew with them. The butterflies and myriad shining insects followed them a little way, and then turned back. They flew to the spot where the moon touched the water, and there dropped the Pine's ring into the sea. Up leaped bright images, and bore down into the depths the wedding symbol. They were the thoughts of the sea, but so wondrously formed and robed, that the Robin and the Sea-Gull hid their heads beneath their wings. Only the moon shone steadily through and through the water.

These bright images carried the ring to the depths. The flower in the shell was there, and they placed it in the centre. It was like a star now in brillancy, for it had become a priceless pearl. The Trailing Arbutus in the ring knew it still, and felt as if now it must die, for its heart could contain no more. But it did not die. It still twined about the ring, and even gave of its life to that.

"Nothing more can be," it whispered to itself, "and yet I know that this is not the end."

From the sea rose vapors that curled up to the Pine. They bore the love of the sea; but none could know of them nor understand their meaning except the Pine. The ceremony of the wedding was over, but the rejoicing lasted till cock-crow. All took part, and there was no shadow of suffering or weariness.

Thus was the Pine wedded to the sea, and yet the best is still to come. Through summer and winter alike he stands upon the hill. The vapors of the sea visit him, and his own pine-leaves are borne now and then to the sea. All know that the two are wedded, yet feel sure that something still is wanting.

As the ships come into the harbor, they steer by the tree, and the sailors say, one to another, after their long voyage, "See! the old Pine is there yet, all alone upon the hill."

But one day the ship, long expecting the end of her voyage, shall reach the port, and the old Pine will no longer be there for the sailors to steer by. It shall gladly yield to the strong winds, — once its foes, but now its allies, — and be borne unresisting, and yearning indeed, to the bosom of the sea. It shall rejoin its ring, and the Trailing Arbutus, and the little bud of pearl. Then the best shall come, but the best shall not end there.

The Golden Egg and the Cock of Gold.

THE GOLDEN EGG AND THE COCK OF GOLD.

PROBABLY you have heard the story about the hen that laid the golden eggs; that is a story well known among the hens, also, who are the ones most concerned about it. The event happened many years ago, but the memory of it has been handed down from hen to chicken, to the present day: it happened in the East; but wherever hens are found, there is the story told. You may well believe that so wonderful a story excites the greatest interest. There is not a chicken that grows up that does not hope to discover the secret, or receive the power of laying golden eggs, and not a hen lays an egg of any sort, but she cackles immoderately as soon as she has done 't, in hopes of its proving golden. It would be tiresome to tell of all the tricks that foolish hens have

played, trying to deceive others into the belief that their eggs were golden. But one thing is certain,—at a period not indeed within the memory of any hens now living, and yet for all that, not so very long ago, there was a hen who succeeded, and it was thus.

She had wandered beyond the limits of the farm-yard, and had strayed into a gentleman's place. As she walked about, trying the yard and scratching in the garden, she came upon a Flamingo that stood as was its wont, upon one leg, having tucked the other away somewhere, and appearing to be driven into the ground. The Hen stood for some time before it, unable to make up her mind whether this strange creature were alive or not. She also stood upon one leg, curling up the toes of the other.

The Flamingo saw her, and at last winked. The Hen then made bold to speak.

"Good morrow," said she, "excuse me, but how do you get about on one leg? or are you driven in?"

This would have been impertinent if the Hen had not been very simple and ignorant of the world's ways.

"I am well enough," said the Flamingo, with dignity. "I have something better to do than to go gad

ding about. I reflect upon things and make up my mind about matters in general."

When the Hen heard this, a sudden thought entered her mind: — the only thought, indeed, that hens ever have that does not directly concern their every-day life.

"Are you a wise bird?" she asked.

The Flamingo nodded. "You may well say so."

"Then perhaps you can tell me how the hen laid the golden eggs."

"I know all about it," said the Flamingo. "I had it from the Storks, and they visit the East and Egypt and Persia. It was in that neighborhood that it happened. An old woman had a hen."

"I know the story by heart," said his companion. "I pray you come to the point, for I am anxious to hear."

"I must begin at the beginning," said the Flamingo. "An old woman had a hen —"

"Yes, I know," said the Hen, "and she laid golden eggs. But how did she lay them? that's the thing."

"I advise you to learn manners," said the Flamingo. "An old woman had a hen, and she laid golden eggs,

one each day, and the old woman thought, — 'One a day is not enough; if the hen has so many eggs in her, 't would be best to cut her open, and have all the eggs at once,' so she took a knife and cut her open, and lo! there were no eggs there at all. Moral —"

"Is the moral, how she laid her eggs?" asked the Hen, interrupting.

"Moral!" repeated the Flamingo. "Be content with what you have."

"But how were the eggs laid?" persisted the Hen.

"That never was known," said the Flamingo.

"But you promised to tell me."

"Will you let me finish," said the other, quite angrily. "I have a great mind not to tell you. But you never can lay golden eggs," he added, contemptuously. "Nevertheless, what the Storks told me I have no objections to repeating, only you must not interrupt me."

"Only go on," said the Hen.

"Well, the Storks know everything, and every year they come North and tell it. They don't come about here. I heard this when I was abroad. You need not imagine I always lived here," and the Flamingo looked about with contempt.

"Did you live on the Hill?" asked the Hen. "One of our roosters came from there."

"The Hill! I came from across the water."

"I know," said the Hen, in a lively fashion, "our Duck has told me about it. She has swam the longest way. But do go on. I won't interrupt."

The Flamingo thought at first he would not reply, but he was anxious to show his wisdom, and so he went on.

"The Storks have told me that the thing has been done since. This is the way. You must go out the coldest evening in winter, just when the rest are going to roost, and lay an egg in the thorn-bush. You must watch it till morning, standing by the side of it; when the sun rises, the first rays that touch the egg will turn it to gold. This I have heard, and it is no doubt true. I have composed a moral about it. It is always—"

"Good night," said the Hen. "I should be very glad to stay and hear you talk, but it is getting late," and she went off.

"An ill-mannered thing," said the Flamingo, and he put his other leg down and walked away.

It was now mid-winter and the coldest night had come. This was known to the ducks, for they could tell by the coldness of the water. You may easily believe that the Hen had remembered what was told her, and that she had told no one else. When the rest had gone to roost she was not to be found, but it was too cold to go for her. In the morning, however, as the others were going about the garden picking up what little they could, and trying to scratch the frozen ground, they came to the thorn-bush. What did they see! In the bush a golden egg, but by the egg the Hen, frozen stiff. She had indeed laid the egg, she had watched by it bravely and faithfully, but when the morning rays turned the egg to gold they could not warm into life the icy Hen. The assembled hens, chickens, and cocks stood around in awe. The cock of the yard stood by the side of the egg and crowed. Such a crow! It sounded like a trumpet, so triumphant, long, and clear! The chickens stood each upon one leg, utterly dumb with amazement. The hens said among themselves, "She never told us! and now how is one to know how it was done!"

But what was to be done with the egg? The cock decided. The speckled hen was to sit on it in a nest,

and see what hatched forth. So the speckled hen sat. She sat fifty days, which was twenty more than usual, but she was determined the egg should hatch. She sat herself dead, for on the fiftieth day, just when the cock declared she should sit no more, she died, and there was the golden egg. He pecked it but could not break the shell. They all pecked together, as many as could get around it, but still the shell would not break. They rolled it out of the nest on to the stone pavement. It rolled farther than they meant, for it kept rolling till it fell into the cistern, and the bravest duck dived in vain for it.

But the cock that had crowed so lustily over it — what did he think?

"To lay golden eggs," said he, "may be very fine, — I don't say it is; but as for me, I will be a golden cock, that will be worth while. Other hens have laid golden eggs. I will be the first golden cock."

But how was that to be done? He asked nobody, he was too proud for that, but he thought all the more.

"The sun makes gold," said he. "There is no doubt about that, if once I can reach the sun I shall become a golden cock." He was a noble-looking fel-

low, and looked like a king among the meek hens of the yard.

"He is most as fine as an eagle," said a little boy to the man-servant, one day; "but he cannot fly so far · the eagle can fly to the sun."

"Then I will fly with the eagle," said the cock, and he remembered it. In the summer he went into the woods, where he had seen an eagle alight. He was so grand a looking bird that the eagle listened to what he had to say.

"You can fly to the sun," said the cock. "I also would fly there, for I would see what it is like."

"Well, we will go in company," said the eagle, "are you ready?"

"Now," said the cock, and he lighted upon the eagle's back. Up flew the eagle in great circles. Still higher, — above woods and houses, always higher, but also toward the great city. They were now over it, now it was out of sight to the cock, for they were too high to see it. But the eagle could still see it. — Higher still, — now the eagle could not see it. — Higher and higher, until the eagle with the unusual weight was ready to drop.

"I cannot go farther," said he. The cock drove his spurs into his side.

"Up," he cried. The eagle made another dart.

"Though you spur me forever," said he, then, "I cannot go higher." The cock spread his wings and set up a clarion crow. The eagle dropped, while the cock flew up: one more flap, — he has touched the sun.

"Cock-a-doodle-doo!" Bravo, Chanticleer! Cock of Gold! It was his last crow. Turned to gold, indeed he was, but the next moment he fell, fell like a meteoric stone: he passed swiftly the eagle who was sailing easily downward. Still he fell down! down! The city was below him. The spire of St. Nicholas's Church lifted its point upward. The Cock of Gold down dropping was transfixed upon it.

It is there to-day; when the wind turns, he turns, but he never crows, and yet — he is a Cock of Gold.

Carl's Voyaging.

CARL'S VOYAGING.

THE hero Odysseus, when living on Calypso's luxurious island, sighed for his dear home in distant Ithaca. "Rugged, but nurse of stalwart men," he called it. And to-day the children of New England, away from their home, perhaps in sunnier climes, and tilling more fertile soil, look with longing for those rugged shores, rocky hills, and inclement skies. Rugged, *and therefore* nurse of stalwart men, is that corner of the United States. Not the least inhospitable is the Old Bay State, as her sons affectionately call Massachusetts. Everywhere, except where the rivers have softened the neighboring soil, rocks work their way upward, and the farmer has almost to make the soil which shall yield him bread. But in the sturdy Commonwealth all trades and callings and arts flourish. Nay, the rugged nurse herself gives a grim support

to her toiling children. On the west she has thrown up the Berkshire hills for a shelter, in the middle of them scooping out sunny lakes, and threading mazes with shining streams. In the centre she makes a pathway for the fertilizing Connecticut, and spreads out broad meadows upon either bank.

But in the east, where the ocean spends itself, as if to break down all man's works, the Old Bay State thrusts out her bent arm, and wards off the blows of the waves, while within the shelter of the arm lies the capacious bay for the navies of the State. Or, if we like, we may say that this arm is not the shield arm of the State, protecting the body, but the smiting arm held up now in stern menace, if any one shall dare attack her children: or we may call it the working-arm, such as she carries on her broad seal, telling of the industry and tireless energy of her sons. But, best of all, let us see in this good right arm, held up manfully against all seas and all comers, the arm of Great-heart, striking blows for righteousness.

The arm is each and all of these. Within its enclosure the Pilgrims landed, and the young colony was nursed; and ever since, along its whole length, have lived a race of hardy men who have dared

weather and seas, and evil-workers. A bleak land is this of Cape Cod. The roads that traverse it, running often through pine-woods and by huckleberry pastures and cranberry meadows, are heavy with dry sand. The coast has few harbors; the sand lies in dunes, and rocks jut out into the sea. Houses stand boldly on the edge of the coast, and gardens huddle about the house-walls, where flowers are coaxed to grow, while the sun, blazing down upon the spiky grass, calls out in the summer-time myriads of snapping grasshoppers, that jump up and down with a sizzing sound, as if the earth were too burning to alight on, and the air too hot to stay in. The dwellers in the houses lead a strange life. One may sometimes find almost a village full of sailors' wives and families, while the sailors themselves are fishing on the banks, or wandering over the sea. Sometimes, also, the desolate crumbling houses stand alone in unplanted fields. The great ocean which washes up on the beach, and falls back at every tide, seems to entice the brown boys, and one after another they yield and sail away. Perhaps at last they sit in their old homes, or in new, more roomy houses, walking up and down the piazza, with spyglass in hand, scanning the wide

ocean for sails, and gossiping long afternoons with old comrades. And yet, perhaps, they find the sea a treacherous charmer, and lie beneath its hollow waves.

More than threescore years ago, one of these brown boys listened to the siren song of the sea, and would, like others, venture upon the deep to sail in quest of the wealth, or fame, or adventure which the sea promises to her followers. The more the old people dissuaded, the louder sang the sea in his young ears, and at last yielding and persuading, he set forth from the homestead with his worldly bundle on his back, walking away across the Cape to the Bay-side where he should find the packet that was to carry him to his ship in Boston. In those days it was a long journey by land, — the Bay was the great main road to Boston.

He had given his good-by to all, and had set forth to make his fortune. What great things were before him! It was stepping out of the old plain ways in the simple house into the wonderful world, where everything was new, everything glorious. Young Carr was like all, — he was now to read, as he thought, the great fairy book which before had been closed. Across the Cape he went, — it was but a few short

miles; he came to the hill that overlooked the bay where the packet was to receive him. The hill was climbed; Carl stood on its top and looked out before him. There was the bay and there the packet; all sails set, and bound on her voyage. The vessel was gone, and he was left. It was as if some one had just opened the fairy book at the most beautiful story, and letting him read the first line, had shut it again.

The water danced beneath the bright rays of the morning sun; the sea-gulls dipped and rose again; the distant sails looked themselves like the wings of gulls flashing in the sunlight; the packet was laden, — who knows with what? Ah! all this was nothing to young Carl. The vessel sailed away with all his hopes, and he was left on the hill-top. It sailed beyond his sight, and then Carl turned back to his plain home. The fairy book was shut, and the old task-book was opened again.

But the story-teller is kinder than we think, and that night Carl, asleep under the old roof which he had thought to leave, had the fairy book opened to him again, and yet it was as if when he had read almost the whole story, the book was closed, — the end he never seemed to reach.

He is on shipboard, and far out at sea; his place is in the tops, and he is bending to catch the first glimpse of the land toward which they are sailing. A faint streak gladdens his eyes; the land lies before his weary sight. And yet, though they toil on day after day, they never reach the wished-for shore.

Or, in mid-ocean, when sailing gayly along, and he sings merrily, — the calm comes; he watches and prays for the wind that shall bear them on their way. The days stretch their hours till it seems as if night never would come; and when night comes he looks for the dawn that may perhaps bring the blessed breeze.

> But still the sails hang loose from the mast,
> And drowsily nod to the shadows they cast.

Or, again, his ship sails for wealthy Ind. It is loaded with western riches, and when he turns again, it is with a vessel laden with tropic fruits, and teas, and rice, costly silks, shawls of camel hair, cashmeres, precious stones, and pearls. When he reaches the home-port, all these goods will he sell, and Carl will be a rich man. But in the middle ocean the great ship founders with all its costly wares.

Once more he sails. He has made many voyages, the sea has given him wealth, and now he will come

back to the home he longs for, where his wife and dear family watch for his coming. He sees the land; he sees the white village; he fancies he can almost see the dear ones behind the window-pane, beckoning him. Ah! the baffling winds drive back the ship, and he cannot reach the home he yearns for. The chalice lifted to his lip is dashed away, the beautiful book is shut before his eyes, — always something fails.

Threescore years and more! The waves still break on the strong right arm of the Old Bay State, but many changes have been wrought in the houses that stand upon that rocky and sandy cape. Carl is not in the plain home of his early boyhood; but, in the State capital, he sits by his own fireside in his great easy-chair. Seventy years have turned his brown hair to silver, have ploughed furrows in his face, but they have not made dim the light of his smile, nor chilled the touch of his hand. The evening sun hangs its crown of gold over his head, as he sits dreaming before nightfall.

Once more he voyages; sailing over again in dreaming memory the seas he once sailed over in dreaming anticipation. The fairy book lies before him; all has

been read but one story. He turns the leaves, and on each page, where once he read the beautiful story which was to be, is written now over that, the story of what has been; and yet this last is more beautiful than the first. Now as then the story seems to fail as the end comes. But lo! when the end is reached, it is fairer than the beginning.

He remembers; there were the early hopes and ventures of his boyhood. He leaped to be a sailor-boy, — the ship sailed without him: but instead of the hard, thankless, roving sailor's life, he has a dear home and shelter from winds and storms.

He remembers; all was prosperous, the winds of good fortune drove him gayly on; and then, — what dull pause! No gain, no advance, everything stagnant! But in the calm days he had time to think, and then came real life, — life everlasting!

He remembers; what grand ventures he made with merchandise, what wealth lay before him; how many ships were to come in to port; what wheels were flying, spinning golden threads of fortune for him. Then, — how the ship sank, the wheels stopped, and his wealth was gone. But when the poor days came, came also the riches of love, the hostages of fortune,

and though the ship sank, he freighted one with a dear son who sailed over the seas, and carried the pearl of great price to poor men.

And yet there is one story in the book not yet read, and Carl sitting in his easy-chair waits till some one shall come and open the book at that last story. The last is the best, he knows, and there will be no disappointment at the end of that, — for it never will end.

So he waited till One opened the book.

The Prince's Visit.

THE PRINCE'S VISIT.

IT was a holiday in the city, for the Prince was to arrive. As soon as the cannon should sound, the people might know that the Prince had landed from the steamer; and when they should hear the bells ring, that was much the same as being told that the Mayor and Aldermen and City Councillors had welcomed the Prince by making speeches, and shaking hands, and bowing, and drinking wine; and that now the Prince, dressed in splendid clothes, and wearing a feather in his cap, was actually on his way up the main street of the city, seated in a carriage drawn by four coal-black horses, preceded by soldiers and music, and followed by soldiers, citizens in carriages, and people on foot. Now it was the first time that a Prince had ever visited the city, and it might be the only chance that the people ever would get to see

a real son of a king; and so it was universally agreed to have a holiday, and long before the bells rang or even the cannon sounded, the people were flocking into the main street, well dressed, as indeed they ought to be, when they were to be seen by a Prince.

It was holiday in the stores and in the work-shops, although the holiday did not begin at the same hour everywhere. In the great laundry it was to commence when the cannon sounded; and "weak Job," as his comrades called him, who did nothing all day long but turn the crank that worked a great washing-machine, and which was quite as much, they said, as he had wits to do, listened eagerly for the sound of the cannon; and when he heard it, he dropped the crank, and getting a nod from the head man, shuffled out of the building and made his way home.

Since he had heard of the Prince's coming, Job had thought and dreamed of nothing else; and when he found that they were to have a holiday on his arrival, he was almost beside himself. He bought a picture of the Prince, and pinned it up on the wall over his bed; and when he came home at night, tired and hungry, he would sit down by his mother, who mended rents in the clothes brought to the laundry, and talk

about the Prince until he could not keep his eyes open longer; then his mother would kiss him and send him to bed, where he knelt down and prayed the Lord to keep the Prince, and then slept and dreamed of him, dressing him in all the gorgeous colors that his poor imagination could devise, while his mother worked late in her solitary room, thinking of her only boy; and when she knelt down at night, she prayed the Lord to keep him, and then slept, dreaming also, but with various fancies; for sometimes she seemed to see Job like his dead father, — strong and handsome and brave and quick-witted, — and now she would see him playing with the children or shuffling down the court with his head leaning on his shoulder.

To-day he hurried so fast that he was panting for want of breath when he reached the shed-like house where they lived. His mother was watching for him, and he came in nodding his head and rubbing his warm face.

"The cannon has gone off, mother!" said he, in great excitement. "The Prince has come!"

"Everything is ready, Job," said his mother. "You will find all your things in a row on the bed"; and Job tumbled into his room to dress himself for the holiday

Everything was there as his mother had said; all the old things renewed, and all the new things pieced together that she had worked on so long, and every stitch of which Job had overlooked and almost directed. If there had but been time to spare, how Job would have liked to turn round and round before his scrap of looking-glass; but there was no time to spare, and so in a very few minutes he was out again, and showing himself to his mother.

"Is n't it splendid!" said he, surveying himself from top to toe, and looking with special admiration on a white satin scarf that shone round his throat in dazzling contrast to the dingy coat, and which had in it an old brooch which Job treasured as the apple of his eye. Job's mother, too, looked at them both; and though she smiled and did not speak, it was only — brave woman! — because she was choking, as she thought how the satin was the last remnant of her wedding-dress, and the brooch the last trinket left of all given to her years back.

"If you would only have let me wear the feather, mother!" said Job, sorrowfully, in regretful remembrance of one he had long hoarded, and which he had begged hard to wear in his hat.

"You look splendidly, Job, and don't need it," said she, cheerfully; "and, besides, the Prince wears one, and what would he think if he saw you with one, too?"

"Sure enough!" said Job, who had not thought of that before; and then he kissed her and started off, while she stood at the door looking anxiously after him. "I don't believe," said he, aloud, as he went up the court, "that the Prince would mind my wearing a feather; but mother did n't want me to. Hark! there are the bells! Yes, he has started!" and Job, forgetting all else, pushed eagerly on. It was a long way from the laundry to his home, and it was a long way, too, from his home to the main street; and so Job had no time to spare if he would get to the crowd in season to see the grand procession, for he wanted to see it all, — from the policemen who cleared the way to the noisy omnibuses and carts that led business once more up the holiday street.

On he shambled, knocking against the flag-stones and nearly precipitating himself down areas and ungarded passage-ways. He was now in a cross street, which would bring him before long into the main street, and he even thought he heard the distant music

and the cheers of the crowd. His heart beat high, and his face was lighted up until it really looked, in its eagerness, as intelligent as that of other people, quicker-witted than poor Job. And now he had come in sight of the great thoroughfare; it was yet a good way off, but he could see the black swarms of people that lined its edges. The street he was in was quiet; so were all the cross streets, for they had been drained of life to feed the great artery of the main street. There, indeed, was life! upon the sidewalks, packed densely, flowing out in eddies into the alleys and cross streets, rising tier above tier in the shop fronts, filling all the upper windows, and fringing even the roofs. Flags hung from house to house, and sentences of welcome were written upon strips of canvas. And if one at this moment, when weak Job was hurrying up the cross street. could have looked from some house-top down the main street, he would have seen the prince's pageant coming nearer and nearer, and would have heard the growing tumult of brazen music, and the waves of cheers that broke along the lines.

It was a glimpse of this sight, and a note of this sound, that weak Job caught in the still street, and with new ardor, although hot and dusty, he pressed

on, almost weeping at thought of the joy he was to have. "The Prince is coming," he said, aloud, in his excitement. But at the next step, Job, recklessly tumbling along, despite his weak and troublesome legs, struck something with his feet, and fell forward upon the walk. He could not stop to see what it was that so suddenly and vexatiously tripped him up, and was just moving on with a limp, when he heard behind him a groan and a cry of pain. He turned and saw what his unlucky feet had stumbled over. A poor negro boy, without home or friends, black and unsightly enough, and clad in ragged clothing, had sat down upon the sidewalk, leaning against a tree, and without strength enough to move, had been the unwilling stumbling-block to poor Job's progress. As Job turned, the poor boy looked at him beseechingly, and stretched out his hands. But even that was an exertion, and his arms dropped by his side again. His lips moved, but no word came forth; and his eyes even closed, as if he could not longer raise the lids.

"He is sick!" said Job, and looked uneasily about. There was no one near. "Hilloa!" cried Job, in distress; but no one heard except the black, who

raised his eyes again to him, and essayed to move. Job started toward him.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" sounded in the distant street. The roar of the cheering beat against the houses, and at intervals came gusts of music. Poor Job trembled.

"The Prince is coming!" said he; and he turned as if to run. But the poor black would not away from his eyes. "He might die while I was gone," said he, and he turned again to lift him up. "He is sick!" he said, again. "I will take him home to mother."

"Hurrah! hurrah! there he is! the Prince! the Prince!" And the dull roar of the cheering, which had been growing louder and louder, now broke into sharp ringing huzzas as the grand possession passed the head of the cross street. In the carriage, drawn by four coal-black horses, rode the Prince; and he was dressed in splendid clothes, and wore a feather in his cap. The music flowed forth clearly and sweetly. "God save the king!" it sang, and from street and window and house-top the people shouted and waved flags. Hurrah! hurrah!

Weak Job, wiping the tears from his eyes, heard the sound from afar, but he saw no sight save the

poor black whom he lifted from the ground. No sight? Yes, at that moment he did. In that quiet street, standing by the black boy, poor Job — weak Job, whom people pitied — saw a grander sight than all the crowd in the brilliant main street.

Well mightst thou stand in dumb awe, holding by the hand the helpless black, poor Job! for in that instant thou didst see with undimmed eyes a pageant such as poor mortals may but whisper of, — even the Prince of Life with his attendant angels moving before thee: yes, and on thee did the Prince look with love, and in thy ears did the heavenly choir and the multitudinous voices of gathered saints sing, for of old were the words written, and now thou didst hear them spoken to thyself: —

"*Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.*

"*For whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me.*"

Weak Job, too, had seen the Prince pass.

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